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ABSTRACT

This student manual, part of the Family and Community Health Through Caregiving program, explores the impact a baby has on its family. Case studies and activities help high school students in: (1) understanding the responsibilities of parenthood: (2) becoming aware of increasing numbers of adolescent pregnancies: and (3) picturing themselves as parents. (CJ)

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Starting A Healthy Family Series/
Family And Community Health
Through Caregiving

'78
90p

Starting
A Healthy
Family:
Choosing
Parenthood

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EDC School and Society Programs, 55 Chapel Street, Newton, Massachusetts 02160

Credits

Project Director
Ruth N. MacDonald

Project Developers
Judith Asch-Goodkin
John McGannon
Jacquelyn G. Sowers
Sandra A. Stevens

Media Specialist
John McGannon

Researcher-Writers
Ann Hagenstein
Elizabeth Perse
Amy Rubin
Anne Senatore
Theodore Sutton

Community/School Health Coordinator
Kenneth A. Zeno

Project Manager
Jill Marcus

Production Manager
Patricia Marshall Jones

Designer
Suzette Phelps

Paste-Up
Ann Schwartz

Editor
Anne Glickman

Consulting Scholars
Dr. Robert Cooke
President, Medical College of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Effie O. Ellis, M.D.
Director, Quality of Life Conferences
American Medical Association
Quality of Life Consultant, Chicago, Illinois

Dr. Lawrence H. Fuchs
Chairman, Department of American Studies
Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts

Dr. George Goethals
Lecturer on Social Relations
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Edward Goodkin, M.D.
Chairman, Union County Chapter
National Foundation/March of Dimes
Assistant Clinical Professor
New Jersey Medical School, Newark, New Jersey

Dr. Neil Macintyre
Professor, Department of Anatomy
Case Western Reserve University
School of Medicine Cleveland, Ohio

Special Consultants
John Crawford, M.D.
Pediatric Endocrinologist
Massachusetts General Hospital
Boston, Massachusetts

Neil Hickey, M.S.W.
Director, Adolescent Social Work Program
Parmenter Health Center
Wayland, Massachusetts

Cynthia Kaufman
Instructor, Department of Biology
Bridgeport College, Bridgeport, Connecticut

Lorraine Klerman, Dr.P.H.
Associate Professor of Public Health
Florence Heller Graduate School for Advanced
Studies in Social Welfare
Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts

Charles S. Mahan, M.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology
College of Medicine
University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida

Henry L. Rosett, M.D.
Associate Professor of Psychiatry
Boston University School of Medicine
Boston, Massachusetts

Carol Smith, R.N.
Martin Luther King, Jr. Hospital
Los Angeles, California

Teacher Guides
Norma Arnow
Emma Rous
Sandra A. Stevens

Business Services
Robert Hassey
Donna Hagerty
Susan MacDonald
Sami Suleiman

Contributors
Laura Arnow
Betty Berry
Maryann Clancy
Betsy Cole
Walter Cole
Henry Felt
Justin Frost
Margaret Frost
Geraldine Gable
John Grant
Margaret Hess
Marguerite Howard
Doni Johnston
Eleanor Jones
Laurel Jones
Janice Kissner
Sherill Koski
Ronald Kronish
Catherine Krupnick
W. Campbell Leaper
Barbara Lonesome
Bronwyn MacDonald
Peggy McNeil
Jessica Mix
Carolyn Motta
Mark Motta
John O'Connor
Richard Peace
Maria Rainho
Stuart Rist
Deborah Rosene
David W. Robinson
Jill Shestokas
Hannah Silverman
Frank Spitzer
William Tichi
Martha Jane Williamson
Susan Wing
Charles Wright

Trial Test Teachers, 1977
Robert Coyne
William Cullinane
Rick Hawkins
Maureen Marshall

Advisory Board
William H. Carlyon, Ph.D.
Director, Department of Health Education
Division of Scientific Activities
American Medical Association, Chicago, Illinois

Wilbur J. Cohen
Dean, School of Education
The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Kurt W. Deuschle, M.D.
Mount Sinai School of Medicine of the
City University of New York, New York, New York

Rashi Fein, Ph.D.
Professor of Economics
Center for Community Health and Medical Care
Harvard University, Boston, Massachusetts

Victor R. Fuchs, Ph.D.
Professor of Economics, Stanford University
Professor of Community Medicine, Stanford Medical
School, Stanford, California

Elizabeth A. Lee
Staff Associate, Division of Education
American Hospital Association, Chicago, Illinois

Lowell S. Levin, Ed.D., M.P.H.
Associate Professor
Department of Epidemiology and Public Health
School of Medicine
Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut

John S. Sinacore
Special Assistant to the Commissioner on Health and
Drug Education, The State Education Department
Albany, New York

EDC School and Society Programs Central Staff

Director
Janet Whitla

Senior Advisor
Lawrence H. Fuchs

Project Directors
Marilyn Clayton Felt
Cheryl Healer
Earle Lomon
Ruth N. MacDonald
Dennen Reilley
Susan Christie Thomas
John Whitman
Nancy Wyner

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"Whenever I delivered a baby I always made it a point to hold the baby and say to the baby, 'You are here! We welcome you to the world, baby.' I wanted to be sure that this was the baby's first message because we know that the brain is like a computer, and isn't it nice to store a message that warm and wonderful at the very beginning."

— Effie O. Ellis, M.D.

Karin Rosenthal

There are a number of efforts that have gone on throughout the length and breadth of the United States in order to talk about the quality of life of our people. And every time we start doing this, one thing becomes very clear: the loss in human fulfillment, the loss in human potential, is extremely great. This is occurring at a rate that is much faster than we can keep up with as a nation, and much faster than we can tolerate if we are to continue as a great nation in the truest sense of that word. For without fulfilled people, how can we consider ourselves a fulfilled society?

In 1970, the American Medical Association began looking at this problem from a medical point of view. We knew that people were coming to physicians in massive numbers, and that these numbers were increasing each year despite our advances in diagnosis, treatment, and cures. What became clear as we looked at the problem was that people were coming to physicians not because of viruses, bacteria, and metabolic problems; not because of lesions in specific organs. Rather, people were seeking help because of their inability to cope, because of problems in their life style, because of problems in their orderly growth and development.

This meant, then, that we had to take a good look at what we mean by health and health care. While medical care is an extremely important part of health care, health is much more than medical care alone. Health means the positive participation of an individual in all the various environments that surround him or her — the physical, social, psychological, and financial conditions in which a person is born and through which a person proceeds with the continuum of his or her life. We must, therefore, place health care within a social, environmental, and educational frame of reference in order to feel that we are developing a sound program of health care. Professionals whose efforts have been fragmented and whose expertise has obeyed strict and traditional boundaries *must work together*. This includes physicians, educators, social scientists, and all others in the human service field, as well as the people they are privileged to serve. No matter what else we are doing, our overriding objective, whether stated or hidden, should be to improve the *quality of life* of our people. To put it another way, we should constantly strive to promote the total human condition of our people.

To achieve this, we must look at the subject in total. We must place each person in the framework of the quality of his life in its many aspects. We must realize that in order to talk about having generation after generation born healthy and living healthy lives, we have to start from the very beginning by thinking of life as a continuum. We must realize that this is a multigenerational issue, that the quality of life of a baby begins with the birth of its parents and continues to influence the quality of life of those who come long after this new person has himself ended his own journey through life. Perhaps most importantly, we must realize that each successful newborn baby presents himself essentially by saying to us, "Here I am, a member of the family of man. What now?" The answer to that question is up to you. It is up to all of us.

Effie O. Ellis, M.D.
Director of Quality of Life Conferences
American Medical Association;
Quality of Life Consultant
Chicago, Illinois

Family and Community Health Through Caregiving is a new kind of health education program that views health with a fresh perspective: health means more than biologic fitness. It is a "measure of each person's ability to do what he wants to do and become what he wants to become."*

Good health results from the decisions we make, decisions that ideally promote our physical, emotional, and social well-being, and connect us to our families and communities in healthy ways.

One goal of this series of books is to encourage people to plan for the future by making choices that improve chances for a satisfying and healthy life.

To make decisions that have positive health results, we must understand:

- why we act in the ways we do.
- how our families and communities can influence and support us.
- how we can make decisions that are right for us by looking at alternatives and their consequences, and then planning wisely.

We have a better chance of making healthy choices when we have thought through our own behaviors carefully.

Starting A Healthy Family: Choosing Parenthood explores the choices and life changes that people face when becoming parents or deciding whether and when to become parents. It includes information on prenatal development, the first nine months of life.

But this is only part of the story. Two other books, *Families With Special-Needs Children,* and *Families and Futures: Helping Self and Others* provide other perspectives on the rewards and responsibilities of parents. In *Families With Special-Needs Children,* parents of children with birth defects talk openly about the pain, frustration, and burdens they faced, the rewards they discovered in raising children with special needs, and the resources they found or did not find in themselves and others for coping with their new responsibilities. The causes of birth defects and how inheritance works are explained, to help you understand both the risks involved and ways to prevent birth defects. *Families and Futures: Helping Self and Others* looks both at the ways communities and individuals can help children with special needs and their families and at the steps parents can take before and during pregnancy to provide a healthy and safe environment for their child.

A glossary is provided with this book. Reading straight through it will tell you a great deal about parenting and pregnancy, and help you to know what information anyone should have who is thinking about becoming a parent.

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*Rene Dubos, "Health and Creative Adaptation," *Human Nature,* January 1978, p. 74.

Introduction

Families And Their Children

Families have much in common, especially the families of one neighborhood, one culture, one economic or educational group, or even one nation. But there also is enormous variety among families.

If you think about the families you know, you will notice that each one is unique. Some families have no children at all; others include a mother, a father, and their children. The children may be infants or adults, and they may live at home or away. You probably know families with only one parent at home, or with stepparents, adoptive parents, or foster parents. Some families have an uncle, aunt, grandparent, or an older brother or sister who acts as a parent. Each family has one or two people, as a rule, who are responsible for taking care of the children and maintaining the health and well-being of the whole family. We will call such persons "parents," whether they are biological parents or people who have assumed responsibility for the family.

Parents, and families as a whole, pass on to children their ways of acting, speaking, and thinking. We say that families *transmit values* to children. What parents expect, fear, treasure, or hope for, all influence their children in one way or another. So do their styles of clothing,

VALUES: ideas and ways of behaving that people believe are worthwhile; standards or models of thinking and behaving that people try to follow.

John McGannon

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Betsy Cole

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tastes in music, and housecleaning habits. Family "traditions" may have a major impact on individual lives, like the tradition that all men in a family will be bricklayers or doctors; they may have less influence on decisions about lifestyle and work, like eating pancakes on Sunday nights or gathering with distant relatives at a particular lake each summer. Some families believe hard physical work is good in itself. Others think work should be as easy as possible, and there should be plenty of free time and play. Values like these, which affect every area of life, are passed along to the children.

Yet children may turn out very different from either of their parents. Some children follow their parents' line of work, religion, hobbies, or moral standards. Others seem exactly opposite from their parents, especially when they are teenagers. Thus, within a single family there may be a shared body of values that ties its members closely together; or there may be an enormous range of values, with differences showing up among brothers and sisters, across generations, or between husbands and wives.

How families transmit values to children is influenced by many things. Among these are:

- the tempo of the times when a child is born and grows up;
- the ways in which parents try to influence children;
- the individual personalities within a family;
- the planned as well as the unexpected events of everyday life.

The process of transmitting values begins very early in life, possibly before we are born. It works through actions, words, gestures, tones of voice, and touch.

ACTIVITY

Family Talk

To Be A Parent

Life's Beginnings

Where do you think your life began? Some of you may think your history began with your grandparents or great-grandparents. Others may think life really began with your earliest memories. Whatever we believe, an important beginning for all of us is the year we were born.

Jerry Howard

ACTIVITY

When You Were Born

Did you ever wonder what it was like the year you were born? In this activity, you will dig up some of the history around that point in your beginnings.

1. As a class, figure out the year in which most of you were born. Collect newspapers, magazines, posters, songs, and other things that appeared that year. Check your attics, basements, and closets, and then try libraries, the Salvation Army, Goodwill, or used book and magazine stores. Each person might find a newspaper (or a microfilm copy of it) from the day he or she was born. If possible, bring a copy of a page or two or at least some headlines to class.

The year you were born:

- Who was president?
- What made the headlines: wars? floods? tragedies? city problems? economic conditions?
- What was the biggest story in your neighborhood or city?
- What was the biggest story in the country?
- What were some of the latest fads?
- What were some of the "brand new" products?
- What was the latest fashion in clothing and in cars?
- What were the most popular records? (Bring some to class or find some lyrics.)
- What were the hit movies? Have you seen them? What were they about?
- What were the TV favorites? Are any still running? Are any being rerun?

2. Talk with your parents and other adults about what they remember from that year. Write down their memories.

- Where did they live? Where did they work?
- What did they do for fun?
- What hair styles and fashions did they like? Do they have any photos of themselves or friends?
- Which groups and singers were popular? Could they sing some of those songs for you to tape? [illegible]
- Do they remember anything that happened in the family or in the world around the time you were born or adopted into your family?
- Do they have photos of you as a baby, of your mother when she was pregnant, of your parents at the time you were born? Do they have a baby book, hospital ID bracelet, or something else from that time?

[illegible]

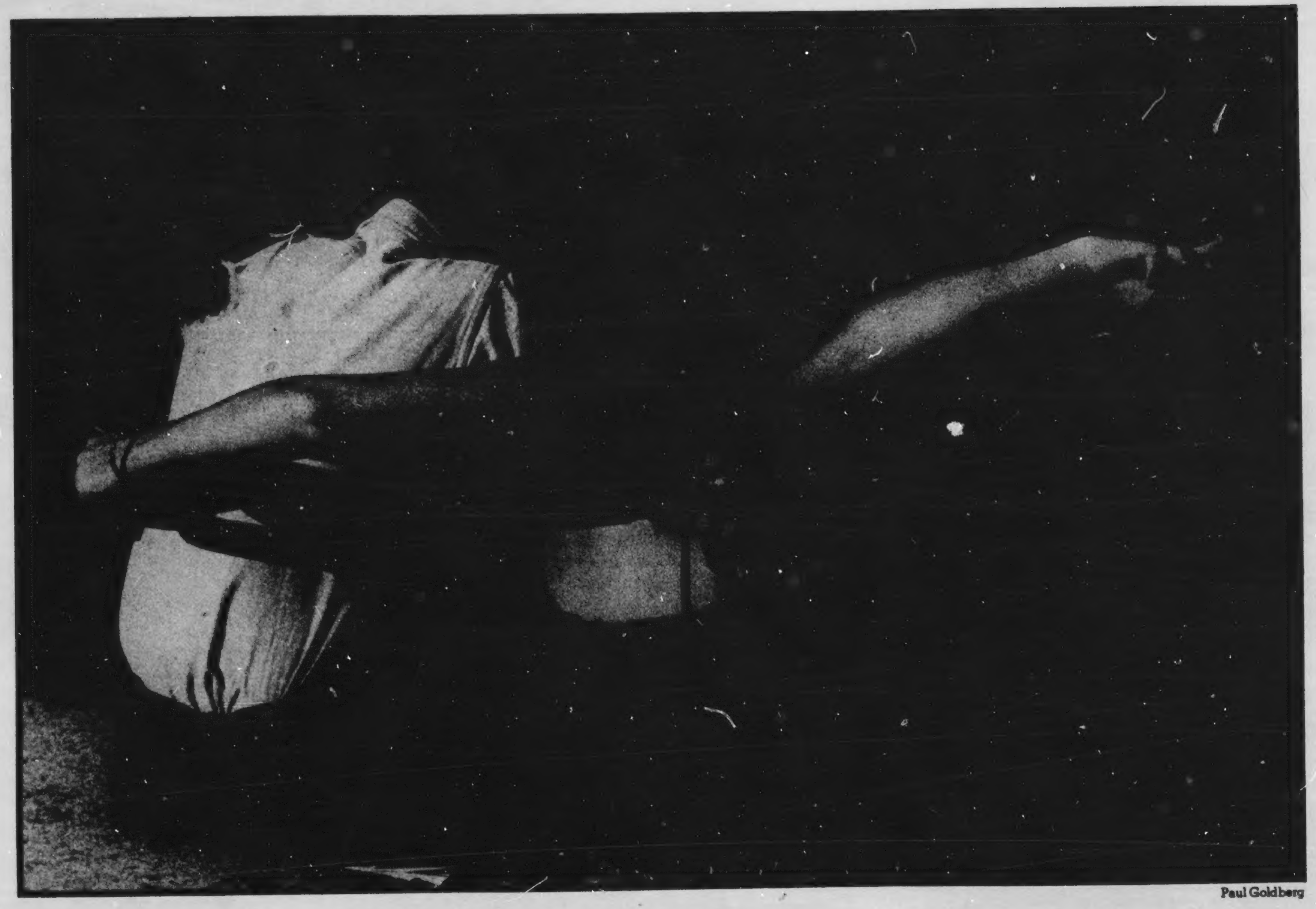
The Times, They Keep A'Changin'

Some people believe married couples should have babies at any time. They believe their own children can help make the future better. Others feel that no time is the right time to have children, because of present world conditions like overpopulation and poverty, or because they feel their lives can be more fulfilling without the responsibility of children. Some people feel they have to improve their own lives and the world around them before they can start having babies.

There is no such thing as a right or wrong time to have a baby. Having a baby is a very personal choice; only you can decide when that time is.

What may seem like a "hard" time to have a baby may be the "right" time for some people. And what appears to be a convenient time to have a baby may not be the right time at all.

Most people like to plan their lives, and to give some thought to what life will be like for themselves and for any children they might have. Sometimes, though, there is little time to plan. Right now in the United States, for instance, there is what experts are calling an "epidemic" of teenage pregnancies. One in ten teenage women becomes pregnant each year; nearly two-thirds of those pregnancies are unplanned. Some teenage women give up their babies for adoption, but 90 percent of them now keep their babies. About half the people your age who are ever going to be parents will have their first child by age 19 or 20. Does that age seem a long way off? Do you think 19 is too old, too young, or just the right time for you to have a first baby? What do you think you will be doing when you're 19? How might the world be different?



Paul Goldberg

ACTIVITY

Time Line to the Future

QUESTIONS

ACTIVITY

Your Class Reunion

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Ten New Families

By this time you've had a chance to consider your own past, as well as your parents' thoughts and hopes when you were born. You've also looked at some possibilities for the future. For some of you, there will be children in that future.

What follows are ten true accounts of how people feel about having babies and becoming parents. These people talk about what becoming a parent, or deciding not to be a parent, has meant to them. Keep the following questions in mind as you read:

- Did the parents plan for the baby? If so, why did they decide to have a child?
- Was there anything in pregnancy or about having the baby that surprised them?
- How have their lives changed, or how are their futures different because of the child?
- What are some differences about these people's situations? How do the differences affect their feelings and experiences of having a baby?

A Word About Case Studies

Accounts like these are called case studies. The people in them are real and they tell their experiences in their own words. They have shared their thoughts and feelings, hoping their experiences might be useful to others. The only changes have been to make the accounts shorter.

But each case is that particular person's story. What each person says and believes can help us understand what it means to be a parent, but it does not tell us how *all* parents should feel or act. Case studies should *not* be seen as models — as setting standards or examples to follow. They are accounts of true experiences that show people doing things they may be proud of or things they may regret; things they might do again and things they have learned they don't want to repeat. You will have to guess or fill in some of the blanks about feelings or actions that are not described, based on what the people say about themselves.

In some instances, the photos do not represent the actual people in the case studies. This has been done to protect the identity of those wishing to remain anonymous.

CASE STUDY

1

Cheryl Svenson

"Why make it hard for yourself?"

Cheryl, 25, is married for the second time and expecting her third child. She talks about the differences between her first two pregnancies and this one, and what parents usually worry about as they see their children grow and develop.

My last pregnancy I lived alone and I was going to school full time and it was very hard on me. But having somebody there that I know and love and trust this time is just going to be a trip. It's going to be great! I'm really excited. This is like a special pregnancy because it is my first planned one and I'm just really hyper about it.

Mostly I'm feeling good. My body image is O.K. John thinks it's beautiful. I mean I think it's O.K. I don't think it's necessarily beautiful. I kind of like the shape and when I look in the mirror in the morning when I'm getting dressed to see how big my belly gets and I like the way it looks. It looks like a healthy pregnancy and so that's all I care about. We just want a healthy baby.

About 15 minutes after I get up the baby starts moving again and I know it's awake and I say good morning to it, and I play with it for a while. You know, pat my stomach and feel it. It's active during the day. But it wakes up shortly after I do 'cause when I wake up it's not moving. And I know that babies actually sleep inside and I know it's asleep a lot, especially at night. Either that, or I've learned to sleep through it. And when you're tired, the best thing you can do when you are pregnant is to rest. You shouldn't push yourself.

John would come home from school and John would make supper and I'd go and lie down for an hour. Or he'd keep the kids away so I could just lie in bed and read a book. I might not go to sleep. I might just put my feet up and read a book and he'd help with the housework. I can't vacuum. My back does hurt when I vacuum. I do all the dusting, though. I dust and polish the furniture so we have a tradeoff. He doesn't have an aversion to housework or child care or anything like that. So I was very fortunate. So I guess this time I'm getting a little extra pampering. He says he doesn't pamper me, but he does, and I'm loving it. And emotionally, it feels really good, too, and it helps a lot, and I'm really happy that he was around. I get mad at him if he doesn't come over and feel the baby move when I want him to. Because sometimes the baby does really neat things. I keep, every day, you know, I say, "Feel the baby," and he feels it. And "See and look," you know? 'Cause I know when it's moving, and if he just came to feel it any old time it might be asleep. And he feels it.

It's funny. When I'm pregnant I think a lot more about my own mortality and I worry a lot more about my children's lives when I'm pregnant because I'm very close to life and life is very close to death. And I just sit and think about someday I'm going to die and someday this child inside of me is going to die and all I can say is that before any of my children have to go, I want to be gone. I don't think I could live with that. If anything happened to one of my children, it would really destroy me. And I don't, I don't know, I don't even like to talk about it, but I think about it. Sometimes it bothers me.

Jerry Howard

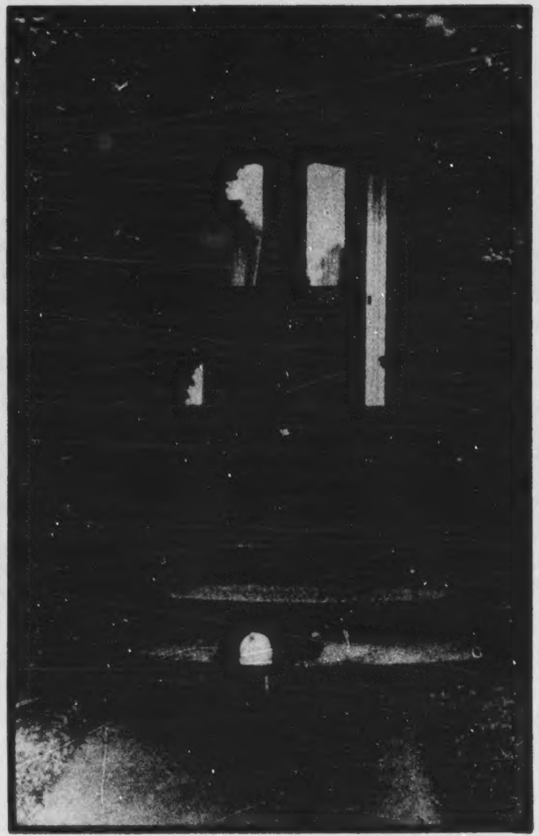
It can depress you for a long time, but just don't sit around the house and just sit there and think about it. But keep doing what you have to do anyway, and if it still keeps coming back, let it just go through your head. Don't let it tear you apart but realize that it will, you know, it will be there and after you're a parent, you are going to sit awake some nights and think what if my kid's crossing the street and a car comes along? You don't realize that you're going to think these things when you're pregnant, but after you've had a kid. I get scared to death sometimes, 'cause one of my sons has to cross a little tiny street to go to the bus stop and it bothers me and I worry about them, and it's part of being a parent, and it's getting worse. Because the more kids you have, the more there is to worry about. But it's just different after you have a healthy baby, you know, and then when it starts learning to cross streets then you have something else to worry about. Or when it starts going out at night and starts driving the car you have more to worry about. Then when it goes off and lives on its own, you have even more to worry about. And it's funny, though, when I was 20 and a parent of two, I really didn't worry at all. When you have a new one and one two years old, you have pretty much under control. You're under a, you're in a situation where they are under your control. The kid is not going to cross the street by himself because you don't let him out of the house alone. It's when they start moving away from the house and become independent and you realize that they are no longer, you're not their watch dog anymore, you're not there to tell the kid to look the other way. But he has to cross the street and you can't be walking him to school forever, and there comes a time when you have to let go. I think that's really the hardest part — letting go, the hoping that you've put enough in their heads so that they can handle any situation that comes up. You hope you've done it, but you never know if you have.

And when you're this child, you realize that our parents did the same for us — worried like crazy, you know, you think it's stupid. I'm O.K., nothing is going to happen to me. That's great, but you know, your mother never believed that! And now that I'm a mother doing what my mother did to me until a few years ago, I can really appreciate it. Being a parent is tough sometimes. You worry. That's part of it. I think that's what gives you gray hair.

When I was 18 and I had my first baby, I didn't understand it either. I didn't understand why my mother was worried about the fact that I got married to this guy and was going to have a baby. My mother really worried and I didn't understand it. I think now that I'm a parent, I understand it. I appreciate it. I can deal with it.

I had graduated in June and I had become pregnant in August and I turned 18 in October. And my so-called boyfriend had gone back to school in New York. My mother was hoping I would meet some nice guys and forget about him. She didn't like him.

Like a lot of other girls, you know, you think, "Oh, my God, he's not going to get away from me now." I mean, it's like a really common thing. Even when you know you want to get out of it, you can't. That doesn't let you get out of it. You feel like you've already given all you've had to give and so he'd better stick around and it can really crush you if he doesn't. But it's not an uncommon reaction for a teenage girl to feel like, you know, "I'm going to marry him." And in my case, I not only had to justify that, I had to have a baby. I mean because that's what it's for. I mean, you shouldn't be just having it. I was just too young to be able to be in a sexual relationship. I was kind of talked into it. I didn't know what I was doing. I was living up to someone else's expectations. His, too, and it was really weird.



Jerry Howard

O.K., so I got pregnant. And when I found out I was pregnant, I wanted to have the child. So I called him up long distance to tell him, and we went and eloped and got married, which was the biggest mistake of my life. And I went through the pregnancy and I had my little boy, who was incredible, and I nursed him for 14 months, and I loved him to pieces, and I'm glad I had him because it would have made living with the guy I married unbearable if I had been alone with him. And I turned, I turned away from my husband after he was born.

I wasn't ready to be married, you know? I could be either a good mother or I could be an 18-year-old person in the process of growing up. I could be one or the other, I couldn't be both. So I was a good mother. At least, I think I was a good mother. And then I became pregnant with my second child because, well, I think I wanted to have another baby just so I'd have a baby to take care of, and just to shut him even further out of my life, just to surround myself with having another baby.

You know, it was, battle lines were drawn. I got no emotional support from him whatsoever. I told my husband I wanted a divorce. I was 20 years old. And we got separated and I went through a lot of problems. I was in a state of terrible, terrible transition. I was at a point where the last couple of years where I had been teenage mommy just all of a sudden, in spite of the fact that I was trying to keep it at a low ebb, all of this growth was happening. Not physical growth — that was pretty much over. All this emotional and mental growth was telling me I had to get out of that situation. The hardest thing for me to deal with was the fact of admitting that my marriage was a failure. And two years before, everyone told me the chances are you are not going to make it. And my mother said, "Don't marry him!" And I didn't listen, but at age 20 I realized that's what I should have done. But the hardest thing to admit when you've done something like that, or had a baby that young, is to admit you might have made the wrong move.

And when you're 18, you really do know a lot but, you just, it's just the time that you lack, it's the experience that you lack. You can be brilliant, but you don't have the experience yet. And when you're 25, you have a lot more of it. And it's like everything else, the experience really helps you out. And if I had a tape recording of me at 25 when I was 16, telling me "You don't know anything," I never would have listened to it. But, you know, if I could have listened to myself I would have waited. Now I don't think, I know I wasn't ready. I wasn't ready for motherhood, although I managed it. But it was hard. I mean, why make it hard for yourself? Just, you know, and it's normal and it's natural and it's healthy and it's beautiful, but you are not ready to accept the responsibilities it's going to bring. It's great, it's wonderful. But in another two or three years, you can handle it better, and it's going to be as great and wonderful as it's supposed to be. It's really all a question of responsibility, everything, starting from adolescence on, and you'd be able to handle more and more of it. And you even learn to like yourself a whole lot when you realize you can handle all this. But it can take you a long time if you try to handle it too soon.

It's really sad, but there really isn't anything I could say or that you could say, or anyone else could say that could prevent a lot of people from getting hurt like this, from getting hurt by getting pregnant too young or having sex too young. You can say all you want and they are still going to say you're moralizing.

It's just hard, you know, it's going to be hard, and deal with it. 'Cause you got to have your book bag filled with pampers or something. It'd be nice to say, "Well, sling the kid on my back and I've got to go, but I'll bring an extra change in case the kid wets through his clothes, and I ought to bring some diapers." Even if I'm nursing, I have to bring clothes and diapers along. And it's a lot of baggage. A place for the kid to sleep, you know? It's not too bad, you know? You have to do it.

When you have this cuddly baby, they're easy because they just have to be fed and changed and they sleep a lot. Then they don't sleep so much anymore. Then they want to play and you have something to do. But you find time to play. Then they can move by themselves, then the fun begins. They learn how to crawl. When they stay in one place, they're not so bad. Then they learn how to crawl. O.K. Then they learn how to walk and as soon as they learn how to walk, they learn how to run. Forget it!

Enjoy them when they are babies. They don't last very long as babies. It seems like a long time when they're getting up in the middle of the night, but it's not and a couple of more months and my baby is in the first grade, you know? I mean like PTA sends me notices and Oh, God! They want me to come to PTA meetings. That's weird. But it happens. You have to deal with it. Some people deal with it by having another baby. Some people deal with it by getting depressed, some people feel very proud that their kids have made it this far. That's probably the healthiest attitude.

They grow up fast enough and sometime when my youngest is about 10 years old, I'll probably look at my old baby crib and start crying or something, and wish for the days when I had one in there. But now that I have one in there, since those days are still here, I don't feel like I'm missing anything because of it. But someday, sometimes I wish they'd even go away — all parents do. But someday, I'll look back and I won't remember the three a.m. pacing the floor, and I won't remember the milk stains on my blouse, and I won't remember the baby food in my hair. I'll just remember the little smile and how cute they were. That's why women keep having babies, because they forget how bad it was with the last one by the time they want the second one. You really do.

QUESTIONS

[illegible]

his feelings during the first meeting?

[illegible]

such as vacuuming and housecleaning.

[illegible]

ACTIVITY

Role Play

CASE STUDY

2

Jim and Mary Riley

"You're not free anymore to come and go as you want."

Jim was 24 and Mary 23 when they were married. Mary became pregnant a month after she married Jim. In the interview, she describes her husband's and family's reactions to the pregnancy, and the ways in which her life and Jim's life changed after the baby was born.

Jimmy likes everything scheduled. You know, this should happen this way and this should be done that way. So, it was a shock that I was pregnant right away. 'Cause it was like everyone else — we were going to wait two years before. I guess I was still, both still, trying to get to know each other. That's what I mean. I was pregnant, we were married, living together. All of a sudden, I'm pregnant and it was kind of topsy-turvy. You didn't know where your feelings were. His was more shock than me — it didn't bother me that much. It did him. He really wanted to wait. He's that kind of person. I guess it took him a little bit of time to get used to the fact that, yes, we were having a baby. Then we started the planning of where we were going to put the baby, because we only had the one bedroom at the time. How we were going to set it up, all that kind of thing. Besides buying things, the new purchases and all that kind of stuff.

But our relationship, it wasn't really strained at all. He was kind and everything during it. He really was. So it really wasn't bad. It was just like a fact of life, I guess. And in my mother's house, it was super to them that I was having a baby right away, because my mother did. They were thrilled, my sisters and all that. The whole family, his sisters, they really welcomed me into the family as one of their sisters. That really makes such a big deal, it really does. If you're accepted into the family and you're liked by your mother-in-law, I think that helps so much in a marriage, it really does. And having his sisters really like me, and I know they do, and I like them.

The last couple of months it was like an indifference. Then I felt kind of funny walking around with the big belly. And I felt kind of blue at the end. The last two months, I just wanted to get it over with, and be back to normal again and be voluptuous! I really mean that. I just felt very ugly and I was very, kind of blah the last two months. I gained weight terribly, right away. I went to the doctor and he yelled at me, screamed at me. I was sitting there and he was saying how obese I was and how fat I would get and what a terrible thing I was doing to my body. And I thought I was dieting. It was the wrong foods I was eating. I was eating canned spaghetti, canned soup, because when he wasn't home I would be eating cold cuts, salty things. So I immediately gained weight and I weighed like 148 pounds the first time I went to him. Fat! So I watched my weight. I went on a, I knew the right kind of foods to eat, so I felt better. And I delivered the baby at 140.*

I wasn't even awake when she was born. I went in and they gave me anesthesia when the pains were really kind of rough there. I was under. I don't think anyone could actually know what it's like until you've been through it. You're physically exhausted, mentally exhausted, your whole body has gone

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Actually, the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology disapproves of salt reduction and reducing diets during pregnancy.

Karin Rosenthal

through, God knows, everything. Then you get this skinny, scrawny, no-haired, horrible — their eyes were huge because of the drops they put into them, with all milk stains all on her nose, and she cried. And I went, Oh, my God, what did I bring into the world? It upset me. My Gerber baby was not a Gerber baby. It was horrible. You wait nine months, you really do. And the anticipation, and you see all these cute little fat babies in the store and that's all you look at. And isn't she adorable, isn't he fabulous, you know. But two weeks later she was fine. Started gaining weight. But that was really shocking. It was. You just wait and wait and then nothing.

Jimmy didn't have much of a reaction at first. He was really concerned about how I was and how I felt. Honestly, it was like years later, I said, "What did you really think when she was first born?" He said he had the exact same reaction as I did. She was a homely thing! I threw away the picture they took in the hospital. I just couldn't accept it. Isn't that awful? But it's the truth.

When I first got home, I guess I felt resentment. I was so tired I wanted to sleep and she never did. It was crying constantly and all that. And I kept saying, it'll pass, it'll pass, I know it will. She was colicky so I was up all night long, walking the floors. And I didn't know it at the time, I was sick. I was getting gallbladder attacks and I didn' know it. It was, I thought it was from having her. So I was sick and she was crying all the time and colicky. So I cried a lot. And I would call my sisters-in-law, but they were all busy with their babies, so I never really had anybody to lean on. My mother had the arthritis. She could not help me. She had a family of her own. She has five at home still. So there's no way, and Jimmy's mother couldn't come down 'cause she was working and she couldn't give up her job. So I really kind of did the whole thing myself.

My husband tried to help as much as he could. He really did. He tried to help prepare the dinner and all that kind of stuff, but he never really changed the baby. We never talked about who was going to do what. At that stage, it was I was the mother, you stay home and you take care of the kid and you're supposed to enjoy it. So of course the resentment builds. So then we had a big fight. Then he could understand. I have to get out of the house, shop, be by myself without the baby. So since that time, he's been very cooperative about so-called baby-sitting, which I don't like the word. I don't accept it in the house. You're not baby sitting your own children. It's cooperation. So that's what it is now. He cooperates and I cooperate with him if he needs something done.

John McGannon

It was much better when she got older. I would say when she reached six months our whole life, it wasn't so hari-kari around the house. It wasn't this constant tension of trying to keep the baby quiet while he was having dinner. I was always trying to please constantly. But once she reached six months, our whole life really changed. She was participating, smiling, responding a lot on her own. She would grab things, things were happier.

I think no one is ever prepared for that, when a baby is first born, you give 24 hours of your time to this child. They don't smile, do anything and just to say thanks back, even a smile is like, "I love you, Mommy," or something. You can grasp from it. The first six months you don't get any of that. It's 24 hours of that constant entertaining and keeping the baby happy and always by your side. But at that stage, they could almost crawl and grab things and do things for themselves. It's great. It really is. Then you can really see a person blooming. It's super. I loved it. Still do.

I think the hardest part of the children was getting out together, getting a baby sitter in. I think that was kind of hard. Maybe I didn't trust anybody for feeding them and making sure they were taken care of properly. I felt I was the only person in the whole world that knew how to take care of this baby, which was crazy. But I figured they didn't know how to feed her her bottle right, so we never went out that much, which was bad. Wrong. Completely wrong. We definitely should have gone out more, by ourselves, together, and left her in the background a little bit more.

I really definitely would have waited to have children, to get to know him better. I never had that going out to dinner, meeting him after work, going here and there on a Saturday night, strolls on the beach. I never had that. Everything happened too quickly in our lives. The turnover was so great it wasn't good. That I regret, absolutely regret. The kids I definitely would have had. I was fortunate enough before I was married, I was able to go skiing, to travel, and really sow my wild oats, as my mother says. Go here and there and enjoy things like that. That I really would have missed. Definitely. I really would have felt I went from a child into parenthood immediately. I think you need those years desperately to grow, to be free. Because once you have these children, you're not free anymore to come and go as you want. You have that responsibility constantly, and there's never, ever, ever a let up. If I get away one weekend a year, I mean that's all there is. The responsibility is enormous. And I don't think anyone, from what I've gone through, is ready to accept this at that early age. I find it very easy accepting things as they are but I really would have found it difficult if I hadn't done a lot of that running around type of thing before I was married.

I think the most important thing in my life is that Jimmy loves me. And I love him. And I think that is terrific. I mean he really loves me as a person. And I love him. And that's how we do things. We cooperate, as I said before, with each other and try to help each other through hard times. So that's how I feel. I never picked anything in my life except my husband. Never picked my children, never picked my family, never picked my relatives, never picked my school, my friends, nothing, except him. So he comes first. The children will grow and leave me unfortunately, but they will do that. And Jimmy will always be there, please God. That's how I feel about life.

QUESTIONS

1. How did having a baby affect the relationship between Mary and Jimmy? What are some clues about their relationship, its strong and weak points?

2. In small groups, try playing the roles of Mary and Jimmy as they try to decide who will do what around the house and with the baby during the first few months after she was born. What about getting help from relatives or baby sitters so they can go out more? What about changing diapers and getting up in the middle of the night? What about her working and his staying home with the baby?

3. To whom does Mary turn for help? When no one could respond, how did Mary solve some of the problems of being a young mother? What seems to have been hard for her? for Jimmy?

4. Mary says she "never picked" her children. What do you think she means?

5. Mary says "you're not free anymore" once you have children. What does she mean by being free? How is a young mother, or father, less free? When Mary's 40 or so, will she be free again to do these things? How do you think she may feel then?

6. Jim and Mary started planning for their baby. Make your own list of things that might be necessary in preparing for a new baby. If you have difficulty knowing just what might be necesssary, ask someone you think might know.

- Make a list of things you may need to buy or make. Then make a list of other preparations that are necessary such as doctor visits, etc.
- Make up a budget and attach a cost next to the preparations. Include such things as hospital costs, doctor costs, etc.
- When planning together, what does the father plan for? the mother plan for?

7. Mary said, "Jimmy took me to the hospital, but he wasn't with me when the baby was delivered."

- When is the father usually allowed to see his baby? In your local hospital is the father permitted to be present during the delivery? What are the advantages of his being there?
- Would you want your husband to be there? Would you as a male want to be there? Why? Why not?

ACTIVITY

Exploring Relationships

1. Break up into groups of three and make sure there is at least one male and one female in your group. The extra male or female in the group will serve as a recorder to write down what is said during the activity.

- You are two people who have been going out together for several months. You feel you want to get closer. Try to tell the other person what you need and want in the relationship. Categorize your needs and wants. You may want to start with things you find easy to say, such as, "I want to spend more time together." If that is not easy for you to say, try something else that suits you.
- Switch roles. Males play females, females play males. Identify your needs in the relationship.
- Get the class back together and compare what people identify as needs and wants in a relationship. What are the similarities and differences in the various groups? What would it take for you and the other person to meet those needs? Consider how those needs might be affected if you had to consider the needs of another person such as a child.

2. Use the same groups of three, only assume the role of a parent and a son or daughter. Express to the other what needs you have for yourself. Then list expectations you have for the other. Reverse roles. Take a look at your needs and wants both as parents and children. How are they similar? How are they different?

John McGannon

CASE STUDY

3

Mark and Ann Conroy

"It's an incredible adventure."

Mark was married for four years before deciding to become a parent. He describes how he feels as an expectant father and the role he's playing in the pregnancy.

We've been married for four years and we've gone through all kinds of discussions about wanting to have kids and not wanting to have kids. We're both teachers, and we've seen a lot of the problems parents have with kids. We knew we wanted to have kids sometime, but we just never could figure out what the perfect time would be. We had so many things we could do as a twosome, and for a long time, it felt like we would be giving up a lot.

And then, this last summer — I was 28 and Ann was 26 — we both came to feel we wanted to have a child now. It wasn't a totally rational decision. You don't do it by weighing the pros and cons and deciding that this is the appropriate time. Having a child just came to seem important enough that we felt the other things we'd worried about would rearrange themselves.

Ann is five months pregnant now, and even now there are times when I really want the baby, and times when I really fear what it's going to mean. But mostly it feels great.

I think it was hardest for Ann in the first few months; she didn't feel well, and she was so tired when she got home from work she just went to bed. And I'd bring her supper in bed. There were times when I felt really angry with Ann, feeling all the pressures on me and the household duties, too. There were times I really resented. But I kept it in because I knew that it really upset her. But it was just like, "Oh, damn, I have all this other stuff to do and I've got to do that too." But other times it was really nice and I was really glad that I could do that. I could take care of her.

Jerry Howard

She needed me. Like when she got really down and depressed about her body changes and not having anything to wear. It just seemed to me really important, with all these physical changes, that she feel good about herself. That she have a chance to look pretty. And so it was a Saturday night, and she had been nagging at me, and I really insisted that we should go out and buy some new clothes. And she really did not want to do that and I kept after her, begging her, and threatening her, and everything else. And finally I really just grabbed her up and put her coat on and took her out to a department store, and bought her all the stuff and had her try it on. And that was fun to do and that was the right thing to do.

She's feeling a lot better now, even though she's got such a big belly she can't even get close enough to the sink to wash the dishes. It was exciting when Ann described what it felt like to feel the baby moving. But when it was moving enough for me to put my hand over her tummy, and feel the baby move, I can't describe what that felt like. That was really something. There were times when I could put my hand on her stomach and I could feel it all the way through my hands, so I could imagine what it might feel like inside. It was kind of like, wow, the baby was practicing martial arts or somersaults. I feel that we already know this kid a lot. And I feel that it is really tantalizing now, before this kid is born. We have known this kid for a long time.

There are times when I feel really close to Ann. And then there are times when I just can't experience what she's experiencing. And there are some experiences of mine which Ann doesn't really share. Like plotting life insurance and kind of facing my old age and possible death, and what could happen to my family. And spending all the time and effort to calculate this and calculate that. But I've enjoyed that. I feel like my father.

It's hard to imagine what it will be like after the baby is born. The people I've talked to say that it just changes your whole life around. And I've got enough confidence in us and in myself to believe that we are going to make it. I mean that we have gone through a lot of growing and changing together already.

I'm not reliving my life through the kid. But I am looking forward to living a lot of new experiences with our kid. And as he or she goes through what I went through, it's kind of like another chance for me personally to remember those things and work through them again. I know it's going to be hard at times. But it's an incredible adventure. It's an opportunity.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did Mark and Ann decide to have a baby? How did they make the decision? Mark said they had to put some other things aside when they decided to have a baby. What might some of those things have been?

2. What is Mark doing to prepare to become a father? What did you think about his comment about death and old age? Do you think there are some roles that the father should play, and some roles the mother should play? Or can mothers and fathers change or share roles with each other?

3. How is Mark taking part in Ann's pregnancy?

4. What does Mark mean when he speaks of experiences that Ann can't share? What kinds of things do you suppose he means when he says, ". . . we have gone through a lot of growing and changing together already"?

CASE STUDY

4

Bob and Diane Franklin

"There's a lot of growing for yourself that you have to do."

Diane is 25 and Bob is 26; they have been married for three years and recently became the parents of an infant boy.

Bob
I guess, I really wanted to be settled before, we both wanted to be settled before we thought about having a baby. When I got through getting out of the service, and working for a year and deciding to go to school, and so like start getting myself, building a platform so that when we did have a baby things would be nice and easy for him. I think because during my childhood I was so deprived of a lot of things. Having a good job, I guess, sort of a sense of security for your child, and you can give him some of the things that you didn't have, and that way his life might be better and enjoyable. You just enjoy seeing him grow up, you know, when you really have the time. We both want to live a little, do things together. I felt there were a lot of things that I really wanted to do that a baby would sort of hinder us from doing. That's why we didn't, you know.

Diane
We had big travel plans, and I think neither one of us were that settled at that time. We were still young and we really didn't know what we wanted to do. We were unsettled as to where we wanted to live. We just didn't have our goals straight in our minds. We were undecided. We were just floating around, trying to find ourselves. The thought of a baby was just taboo. No way four years ago! In fact we kidded ourselves in the last year and said, you know, maybe we should just be getting married now. There are so many things that you want to do and we just had to grow together ourselves. I think that's what we did during those earlier years.

When I got pregnant, we knew that it was possible that I could get pregnant but we weren't doing anything to prevent it at this time. It was just sort of, we'll see what happens. And it happened. But we were happy when it happened, surprisingly enough. There were the financial worries — Robert was in school and I was working. We thought about that and I don't know about him, but I was scared. I knew it really. I had always been very regular and everything. I started with the cramps. I noticed a few areas of my body started getting a little bit large. I kept teasing him about it. He didn't want to believe it. And finally we went to the doctor.

Once we found out I was pregnant, we really started thinking about our future, what it was going to be like. We really started planning for the baby.

Bob
I didn't know anything about it, you know. She was a nurse, she knew a lot about it, and it was a lot to learn.

Diane
I was always looking for landmarks. When should I start maternity clothes, I was thinking, from 3½ to 4 months. I went into them a little early, but I think maybe I was just eating too much, so I had to get into them early. But this type of thing, I was interested in them, asking about them. The physical changes in my body, I always questioned those. I think we both made visits to the doctor. And this was good, because I was hung up on this family concept. I wanted us to start being a family from the beginning. I think once he started, the first

time he heard the heartbeat, he was scared because it was beating so fast he didn't know what was happening. And these were the type of things that I enjoyed because I wanted him to feel a part of it, to be a part of the whole pregnancy and not just wait until the baby starts kicking, and then he could put his hand over there and feel it, which he did and which was exciting for both of us.

Bob
I was anxious in a way to see the baby. I just wanted to see, I wanted the baby to be healthy. I wanted to see what the baby looked like. My interest was the baby, I think.

Diane
Not me, huh!

Bob
I really got into the baby in the last months, I think. I went into the delivery room. I was with her during her entire labor. I was in the delivery room and everything. It was just a very unique experience. It was really nice. Seeing your baby being born.

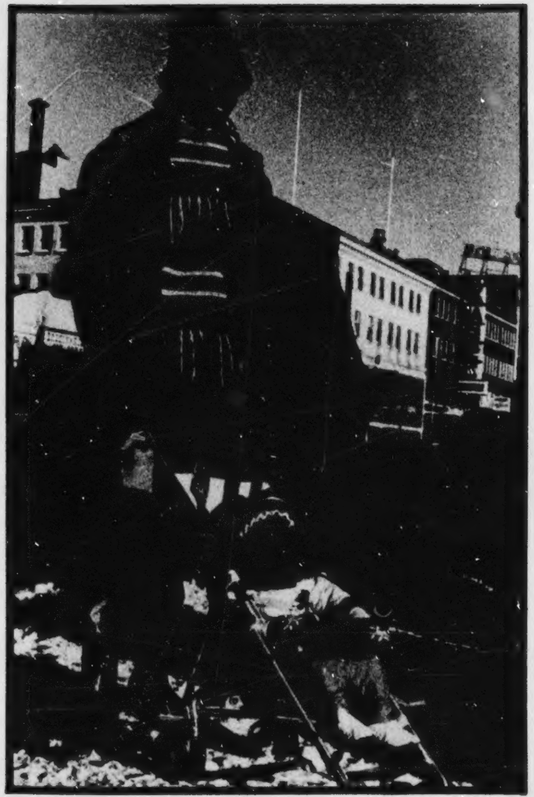
The first night the baby came home the baby was getting adjusted to his new environment and we were getting adjusted to the baby because the first night he kept us up all night. We may have gotten about a good 45 minutes of sleep. He would go to sleep for about 15 minutes then wake up and cry and cry. I had to go to school the next day and all this stuff. That was the biggest thing, just getting used to hearing this baby crying at night, making all these noises, and you lost a lot of sleep, you know?

John McGannon

Diane

There's about eight different breathing sounds that we have to get used to. We were anxious. I think we were scared. I come from a large family. There are seven children in my family. And we had nieces and nephews that were always around. We were around kids but this is a little bit different, because we thought that taking care of the baby, the physical care, wouldn't be anything for me. I could handle it. But as it turns out, it's quite different with him, because you know, he's mine. I've worked with kids before, I've even worked in pediatrics. And after I worked with those kids eight hours, I went home. But this one, he hangs around for 24. He doesn't go anywhere!

Now I know which cry means, "I'm hungry," which cry means, "I'm just fussy." I didn't really know what to do with him the first week. The second week I started feeling bad about it. What are we doing with this baby in our lives? It was so uncomplicated before. And then I had guilty feelings for thinking that way the next couple of days. But since then, I think I'm just getting used to it. I made up my mind — I don't need eight hours of sleep every night. I can get up for an hour, feed him, and we can both go back to sleep for another couple of hours and I'll be okay. I've learned to take a nap during the daytime when he sleeps. I think the most important thing that I've learned is that I don't have a schedule to my life anymore. He's just changed it all around. All the focus is on him right now. My first feeling was helplessness. I felt absolutely helpless. I didn't know what to do with him. And really he's the one that was helpless — instead of being a little miniature adult, he's really a child, a baby. I had to get to know him. I thought that this care — I didn't think that it was going to be easy, but I didn't think that it was going to be as confusing. It's not difficult, but it is confusing. We haven't tried to put him on a schedule. We let him demand his feedings. Just sort of get used to him is the whole thing.



John McGannon

Bob

When he wakes up at night, I'm not the first one to jump up, 'cause I realize sometimes that I'm just tired. Sometimes we lay there and see if he'll go back to sleep. And if he don't, I will jump up or she will jump up, but I'm pretty supportive in that way. I enjoy him. Financially, we're trying to get that together for him.

Diane

We used to go to the movies a lot. Go out quite a bit, go visit friends, this type of thing. But since the baby came, we've only been out three times. And last week we were thinking, well, last week was Robert's birthday and we always celebrated it before. It was no big deal about going out and having a celebration. But this time it was different because Akita was here. We were afraid to leave him. We said, well, we can just go out later. And this type of thing we've had to give up. It seems like we just don't see as much of each other. We see each other, and that's it!

Bob
We've both been neglecting each other. I enjoy the baby and I spend a lot of time with the baby. I do have to study. I think I'm neglecting her in some ways and she is neglecting me in some ways. I guess I can understand that. You might say in the back of your head, if it wasn't for the baby we could be going out, we could be doing this, we could be doing that. But I think that everything is okay.

Diane
I really like the way he's handling fatherhood. As far as my expectations, he's met them all. He plays with the baby, talks with the baby. As far as his physical care, he does as much as I do when he's here. And I really didn't expect that, as far as the physical care. Knowing him I didn't think he'd be helping out as much, and I didn't think he'd be willing to help out as much, but he's really surprised me in that aspect. And there's no reason why he shouldn't. But I still have this thing about men just don't do certain things. I didn't have a hangup about it, I just accepted it. Society dictated that I accepted it. He's really proven himself quite a father, I think. I'm very happy with him. It's just strange sometimes. I've only had five weeks of it. I don't think I could have dealt with it at 14 or 15 years old. I really think that's a little young.

Bob
No, I never would have thought about getting married. I enjoyed girls. That was my main concern, I guess. Well, not my main concern, but that was one of the things I enjoyed. I never thought I would be getting married at that age. It was a fun life. Just have a good time. That was it.

Diane
I really think that's too young to be in love. There are a lot of things that you still want to do. You have to see. There's a lot of growing for yourself that you have to do. Even now, there's a lot of growing that I have to do. Those years are very important in terms of what you want to do later on. And to be tied down with a baby — that's what happens. You're with a baby almost constantly. You need the time for other things. You need time for yourself primarily, just to find out who you are and start making some decisions as to what you want to do. I just don't think that a baby would fit in there.

Bob
We have been a little lucky in some ways, I think. But I really feel that if you plan to have a baby, and if you're together yourselves, and if you're planning to have a baby, I think everything will work out. If you work together, and I guess that's what we did. We really decided to and we thought about all of that. But it just worked out for the better for us. Do you have anything you want to — what would you recommend?

Diane
I think you really should plan. You should know what you are doing. You should know that the baby will take a lot of time. Babies are quite demanding. They are human beings and they have little rights too, and if you can't give them some of the basic things, I really think you should wait awhile.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did Bob and Diane wait four years to have a child?
How did their lives change after the baby was born?

2. Again, Diane brings up the special strains and extra work for the mother, especially during the first few months. How can fathers and mothers share more equally both the extra work and the joys of caring for a baby? It is often said that mothers, especially, know how to nurture babies. Can fathers nurture as well? In what ways?

3. How can a baby bring a couple closer together? How could it come between them? What do you think makes the difference?

CASE STUDY

5

Sam and Rebecca Rubin

"We have a big investment in this child."

Sam and Rebecca are the parents of a seven-month-old girl. Sam has "mixed feelings" about having the child after six years of marriage and about his new role as a parent.

I was married, let's see, six and a-half years ago. Is that right? It's almost seven? So we were married for six years before we had a baby. My wife wasn't really ready and we wanted to grow together. It takes a while to get ready, I think, to live with each other. It's funny when I think about it now. The decision to have the baby was far from spontaneous, it was very planned. But on the other hand, it wasn't all that rational at the very time when we decided to start trying to have a baby. We kind of decided that now we were both ready.

In the first two trimesters — the first six months — my wife was, she really got along well. I mean, she didn't have any of that stuff in the first three months. She didn't have morning sickness, and she wasn't nauseous, and she felt very well and she didn't begin to show until her fourth month really, get fatter. And she got along very well in her work. I can remember in the last couple of months sort of — it was already summertime — caring for my wife more; washing the floors and the bathroom, and things like that. Because she was getting more nervous, like, "It's really going to happen? It's really going to come out of me?"

I tried to take as much part in it as I could really. For example, we both belong to a clinic and we have a doctor that we saw through the clinic and I would go with her every time to see the doctor. Mostly because I was interested all that time. I remember the first time very clearly that she heard the heartbeat. I'd come in and hear the heartbeat, and every step along the way. And it wasn't just ideology, because when the day came, I really felt prepared. I knew everything that was coming off in the hospital. I knew what my options were and it even helped in the last few months of pregnancy. We knew what questions to ask the doctor, and I could be involved too. And I'm not generally good in scientific things, but because I was so interested, I guess, I really understood enough to know what was happening to the baby and what kinds of things to expect.

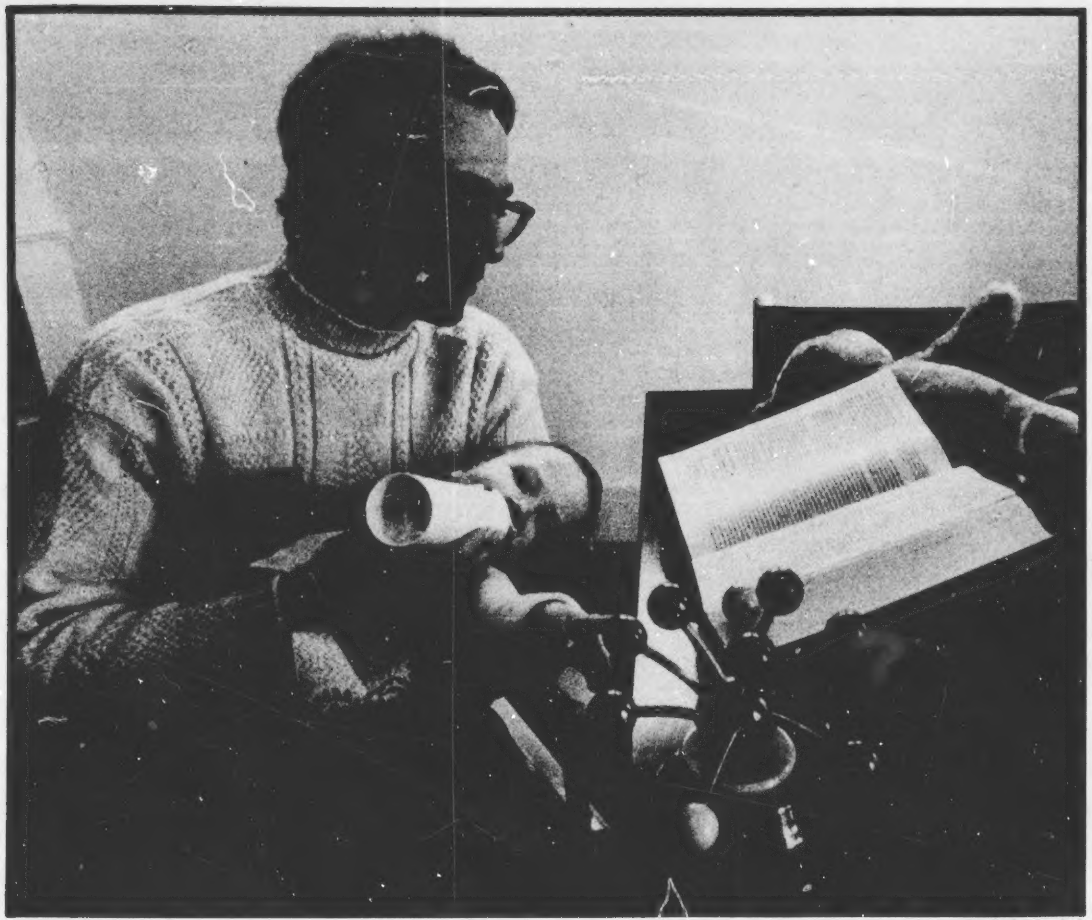
There was a lot of anticipation as the baby began to move more. It was just kind of wondering what's going to really happen. The baby came a few weeks early and it just all happened, very fast. I was there throughout labor. The labor was a fairly short labor; it was only five hours, between five and six hours.

When my wife was in the hospital, and I spent a lot of time in the hospital the week the baby was born, everyone would come and want to see the baby, and no one would ask, "How are you?" One person brought her a present in the hospital and everything else was presents for the baby. So that leads to a whole other area. I found that having the baby that your own life becomes secondary now. When you wake up in the morning now you don't think of yourself anymore. You usually wake up to the tune of the baby and you think of her right away, at least I do. Got to get her bottle ready or change her. You don't sort of shower and get dressed and start the day. I was away last week for the weekend, out of town myself, and it was such an irony to get up and be by yourself in the morning — it only took ten minutes, instead of the usual hour. So there's a lot of it — it's a real change, because I can't think about myself first anymore. The first few days I remember coming home and realized I really have a baby at home. I would bring my briefcase home and I would see how hard it was to do anything else at home besides just take care of the baby. It's very hard. It causes tension when I try to, so it's better off if I don't. So I almost rarely bring things home now to do.

So we have a baby sitter, a mother of four children who comes in three to three and a-half days a week and that costs us a good amount of money — nearly $60 a week. So we're just about making it this year. We used to be able to save money between the two of our incomes. We don't do that anymore. We try to spend less money. I mean things work together. We're home bound a lot more, too, so we don't do the types of things we used to. Although we were always sort of thrifty. We were not big spenders.

I can remember something funny though about the first day we got a baby sitter. I remember very well the first day we had the baby sitter there were tremendous feelings of abandonment of leaving the baby that day. We were both extremely nervous. But we kind of got used to it. And there's a lot of worry that goes into what is the baby sitter doing, and is she doing it right, and you know? It's kind of a gamble, really. As a matter of fact, we've gone out very rarely so far in seven months, very rarely in the evenings.

Karin Rosenthal



Karin Rosenthal

In the first two months, it was day and night and it wasn't so easy. It was a 24-hour-a-day thing for the first couple of months. My wife was breast feeding for the first couple of months, so I didn't get up all that much in the beginning. But in the first month the baby was, had no problems, in the sense of she kind of ate and slept fairly regularly. She was up a lot but she'd be breast fed and go back to sleep. Then in the second and third month she developed what they call colic, which means she was gassy and she would cry a lot and she was — it was very difficult to calm her.

We tried all kinds of things, but basically we had to wait it out. A few times I saw the sun rise. We walked the floor, we tried to calm her, and to hold her, and you really had to be patient. I remember being up until three, until five, and there were times when my wife would sleep an hour and I'd sleep an hour and it was very difficult. There were some exasperating moments there where we looked at each other and she'd practically cry. I mean, you'd worry, what am I doing wrong? Just all kinds of feelings came out. I can remember having feelings of anger at this kid. The nerve, I mean, and it used to make me frightened. And I remember saying this to other people, I can really understand child abuse. I used to have scary visions of throwing the kid out the window. I used to imagine it — we lived two flights up — or that I would drop the kid on the floor, something like that. You know, like you see in a film sometimes, something happening and it all splattering. I use to really have these visions and they terrified me. I wouldn't say that I had nightmares where I woke up, but I used to imagine these things. I would say, I remember how the baby would elicit from me feelings of anger that I would just have to put aside. I would never sort of verbalize them and bring them to really get angry at the baby, because it's silly. It was just very hard.

I used to be envious that I couldn't feed the baby, I did, I really did. And I was excited — I remember that day — when I gave her the bottle. I could feed the baby and I thought it was a great thing. I really saw that was something women could do that I couldn't and I was kind of out of it. I was taking out the garbage and the diapers and she was nourishing the kid and it was just a very different role.

Overall I've been surprised at myself about how much I could be with the baby and just do different things with her. Whether it's taking her out for a walk or just bathing her. I just really enjoyed it more than I imagined. I have fun, much more than I would have expected.

One thing that's happened that I think we've noticed in the last few weeks is that she seems to like human company a lot, really does. If you put her in the crib and you walk out, she'll turn and look out and put her hands up. She wants you. If you walk out of the room she doesn't like it, she doesn't appreciate it. She demands your attention.

Occasionally, there was an interesting problem where the baby would be there. I'd be taking care of the baby and I'd be trying to work with this person who came over the house and there was a conflict of interest there. She'd win, of course, but it was sort of difficult to take care of the baby and do something else at the same time, really, and most of the time it didn't work out too well. Because I'd also kind of feel bad. Why am I putting her down in the crib? There's another whole issue of putting the child to sleep. Sometimes you want to have some time to yourself, how shall I say it. And we're kind of loose people in a sense, we have not initiated a schedule where the baby must go to sleep at six and get up at six. We kind of let her do her thing. If she falls asleep, we're not going to keep her up an extra hour so that she will sleep on our schedule. She's boss really. And what it means is that it is very difficult to sort of plan an evening. I can't tell you what her definite bedtime is. It's somewhere between seven and nine, and sometimes ten and sometimes eleven.

It isn't all peaches and cream. There are, I mean, thank God, she's a very healthy child. She's only been sick once, and that was sort of like nothing more than a cold. And she generally smiles, and she's generally a pleasure to be with, much more so than she was especially in those early months — the second and third month. I've joked about this with you, but it's just a fundamental change in your life. We used to just like to pop off and go to a movie or just go outside and take a walk. You don't do that, you don't just go out and take a walk, especially in winter. You've got to go down two flights and bundle her up and get her in a carriage. It's just a much more complicated operation. Apparently we haven't even gotten started yet. It's amazing the amount of paraphernalia and we try to limit it. We really do.

But there was a time when we would be visiting people and we didn't want to — the last thing we wanted to do, even if we weren't going to be going out to movies, and we're sort of movie fans, we used to do that a lot — we still wanted to be able to see people. And we wanted to take the baby with us and she is pretty portable when she's little. But we would find that she'd get very unhappy in other people's homes. And it's harder to calm her outside in someone else's home when she doesn't have her own crib and her own things that she's used to. And there were times when we were kind of, sort of embarrassed with other people, or it made it very difficult to go to someone's home and have dinner or lunch when the baby was going to be up and crying half the time. But that seems to be fading. As she gets older she's able to adjust to changes more. But it isn't all easy. There are a lot of hard moments. There just are.

We sort of have a big investment in this child now. It also, what it does, I think, it makes our life very family centered, in the sense that this is such a new thing that we have to concentrate so much energy into just adjusting to the idea that we really have this child. We are still sort of amazed at it sometimes. And learning to live with another person in the house. We are not able to concentrate on our things as much as we used to and when we come home the baby tends to dominate our lives.

QUESTIONS

1. What were some of Sam's mixed feelings about having this child when they did?

2. During the first few months, a baby obviously goes through some rapid changes. How do these early stages of development, as they are called, seem to affect a parent's relationship with a child?

3. How does this period of the first few months of baby's life affect the parents' relationship with each other? How does all this help fit the baby into the *family*?

4. Sam says his own life became "secondary," and he also says he "invested" a lot in his daughter. Yet he also says he is at least as happy now with his child as he was before her birth. What is important in Sam's life? Why do you think some worthwhile things are so hard, even painful, at times?

5. Have you ever felt like Sam when he said he had a "vision of throwing the kid out the window"? Are feelings like that normal? What can you do about them?

6. Let's try another role play, but this time let's pull a switch: the girls try playing the role of Sam and the boys play his wife. The scene is the nursery in the middle of the night when the baby has colic. Talk to each other, playing the reverse roles, about being mother and father to a small baby. What is each parent's responsibility — is the mother's different from the father's?

7. Sam says he realized suddenly there were things he couldn't do for his baby that only a mother could do — like nurse her. Besides the physical role of nursing, do you think mothers and fathers must play different roles? Recently, some studies show that very "masculine" men and "feminine" women [illegible] a lot, may be less able to [illegible] situations, and may be less [illegible] in many ways than men and women who have some masculine and some feminine qualities. What is masculine, [illegible] feminine? Is it something [illegible] it mostly tradition or culture?

8. Draw cartoon figures [illegible] of drawing showing any [illegible] ties you've read about [illegible] even exaggerate, some of the [illegible] expressions of feelings [illegible] way the parents tell the story. [illegible] short, short story about [illegible] families: "A Day (or An Hour) in the Life of Sam and His Daughter," etc.

RESEARCH AND REPORTS

Jim and Mary, Mark and Ann, and Sam and Rebecca all talk about the tremendous changes a baby can make in the lives of the parents. A number of years ago, E.E. Masters studied the effect of the first child on 46 middle-class couples. Masters found that 38 of the 46 couples (83%) reported "extreme" or "severe" crisis in adjusting to the first child.

The 38 couples . . . appear to have almost completely romanticized parenthood. They felt that they had had very little, if any, effective preparation for parental roles. As one mother said: "We knew where babies came from, but we didn't know *what they were like.*"

The mothers reported the following feelings or experiences in adjusting to the first child: loss of sleep (especially during the early months); chronic "tiredness" or exhaustion; extensive confinement to the home and the resulting curtailment of their social contacts; giving up the satisfactions and the income of outside employment; additional washing and ironing; guilt at not being a "better" mother; the long hours and seven day (and night) week necessary in caring for an infant; decline in their housekeeping standards; worry over their appearance (increased weight after pregnancy, et cetera).

The fathers echoed most of the above adjustments but also added a few of their own: decline in sexual response of wife; economic pressure resulting from wife's retirement plus additional expenditures necessary for child; interference with social life; worry about a second pregnancy in the near future; and a general disenchantment with the parental role.*

In what ways do the people in the previous case studies say similar things about the arrival of children? How and where do these case studies differ with Masters' study? What do you think causes "extensive" or "severe" problems in parents adjusting to their first child? What could you do to make this adjustment easier (as a possible parent yourself, or as a neighbor, friend, or family member)?

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* Masters, E.E. "Parenthood as Crisis," *Marriage and Family Living,* November 1957, in Peck, E. and J. Senderowitz, eds., *Pronatalism: The Myth of Mom and Apple Pie,* New York: Thomas Crowell Company, 1974, p. 201.

CASE STUDY

6

Anthony Hawthorne:

"I'm going to be different with my child."

At 19, Anthony is the father of a baby girl. Although unmarried, he feels a deep responsibility for the child. In the interview, he discusses his ideas about what a "good father" is and why he's trying to avoid the mistakes he feels his own parents made.

My girlfriend and I are about the same age, 'cause our birthdays are eight days apart. We're both 19 right now. We've been going together for four or five years. I was about 15 or 16 when we started. And I've never been involved with other women since I've been going with her. It seems ironic to me that I didn't, too, because most people do. But I didn't. And I consider my relationship with her a loving and caring relationship.

When I found out she was pregnant, I was happy. She was happy, too. Like we both wanted it, and I told her that I would accept full responsibility, and I would stay close to her, whenever she needed me, and all that. And that's just what I did. Like, when she went to the hospital, I was there. She didn't have no false labor pains, or anything like that. When she went in, it was 3:00 in the morning. And her sister came and got me out of bed. I put on my clothes, and I stayed with her in the hospital until she had the baby at 3:30 the next afternoon, and I stayed there all that while. Well, I stayed there until they . . . they had to put me out of the hospital.

We had a little girl, and she's nine weeks old. We just had this baby, so I just got through dealing with this. We felt that if a girl and a boy feel like they can deal with it, that they have themselves together, and financially are able to take care of a baby, and you know, devote half of their time to the child — well, it would be all right. She could go and have the baby. And both the girl and the boy would be able to deal with it.

I've thought about marriage, but not until I get myself together. Not now. 'Cause it would seem dumb getting married right now. Like, we don't even have a house now, you know? I live with my mother, and brothers and sisters, and she lives at her place. You know? So, that's the way I feel, like you shouldn't get married unless you have something going for yourself, and it's a continuous thing. And you're able to deal with something.

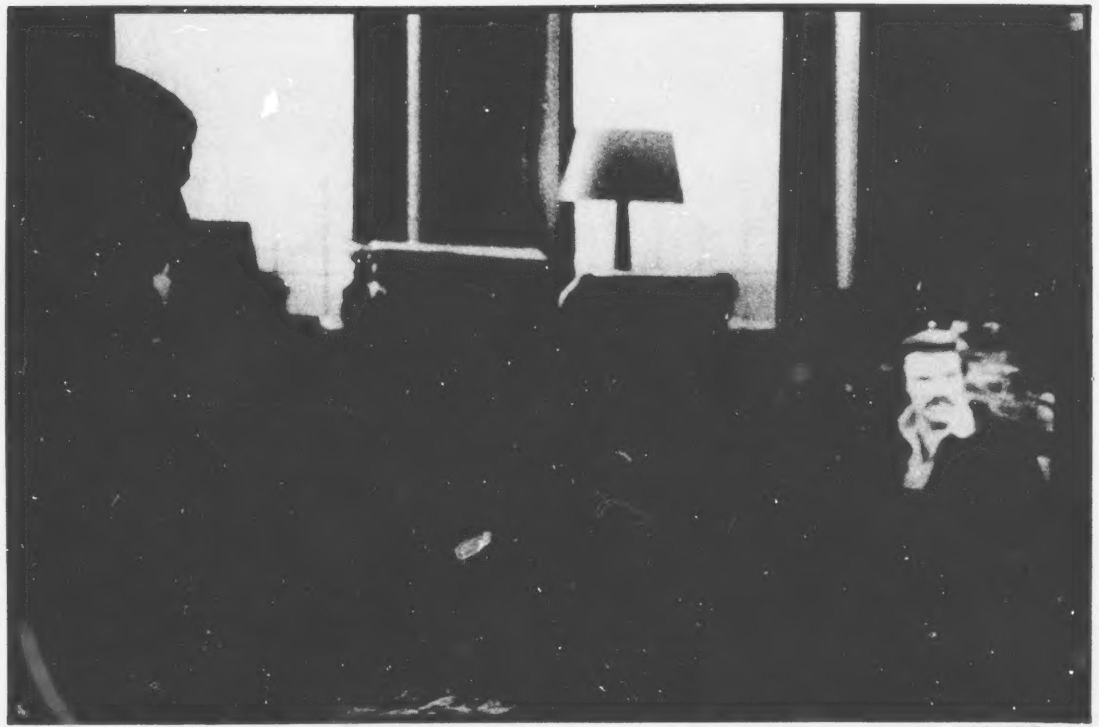
My girlfriend's got another little girl — she's got another little girl by another boy. But I feel the responsibility for that child, too. Because it really is nothing to me. It's just a minor technicality that he's the father. You see, she was going with this boy on a short-term basis. I'd say it was like a month. And she came up pregnant. He didn't want to accept full responsibility for the child. He went away to college, so me and her went back together, and I've been dealing with it ever since then. So, like, he comes back now and then. And I don't care if he wants to see his child, and that stuff. But as far as trying to come into my territory with my lady — that's out. And right now I feel she's committed to me. I'm confident about that.

Every day I go off to work. I go home, and I stay in the house, don't run around and hang out. And I go get her. I go get my baby. I get both of them, and I take them home with me. And I sit in my room, and we look at TV together. This is about every day.

I think a father is very important in a child's life. When a kid gets big, and they have somebody both really sticking with them like they're supposed to . . . . And a child — children — will come out real better. Like schoolwise; checking up with 'em in school, and like seeing how they're doing. And all that. And then, like, children will come out real good.

My father and me, we wasn't very close, and I used to take care of my brothers and sisters. I have four brothers and five sisters at home. And he wasn't very close to me. He would never give me advice on nothing. You know, how to do this, and how to do that. And he didn't teach me anything. Like, he knows how to play a whole lot of musical instruments. And he could of shared that — taught me how to play all that. Maybe I could have used all that. But I couldn't ask him for nothing. I wouldn't even call him up today and ask him for nothing.

So, I'm just going to go out there, and do my own thing. And I feel that'll make him mad. You know, if I can get farther than what he done. You know, I don't even care how he feels. I mean, I am . . . I'll be a man



John McGannon

in a couple of years. And I wouldn't even care. It'll be just like not having a father. It's been that way for about . . . at least ever since him and my mother have been separated. It's been like that. That's been eight years.

But I'm going to be different with my children. I want both of them, my children, to have a happy life. To lead a life like a child's supposed to lead. You know, growing up and checking things out. And getting the right talks and things like that. Taking them out, and showing them something. Exposing them to something. I figure they'd be well rounded with something like that by the time they get up in their teens.

And I see myself spending a lot of time in the home with them. When they get big, anything they need or want to ask, I want them to be able to come to me. 'Cause, like, that's like what a mother and father is really for — somebody to come and ask questions. If the kids don't know something, or maybe there's something they heard, or anything, and want to know about.

And my responsibilities for them doesn't end until they're married, or gone to college, or something like that. That's when it ends. And even still, if they needed something, they could always come back to me or their mother, and we could try and get it to them.

QUESTIONS

1. What does Anthony mean when he says he wants to be "different" with his children? What does he want to avoid that his own father did or didn't do? What kinds of experiences does he want to provide? What does he mean by "taking them out, and showing them something"?

2. What does Anthony think a parent should have before having a child or getting married? How has he tried to do these things? How do you think he considers himself to be a good father when he isn't ready to get married yet?

3. What responsibilities does Anthony list for the father of a new child? Can you think of others? Are there any clues as to whether Anthony is a responsible father?

4. Do you think Anthony will stick to his ideas? Will he be "different" from his own father? Do people tend to repeat mistakes, and do the very things they don't like in others, especially their parents? Why? What kinds of help could Anthony get from friends, family, professionals, to help him keep his ideal?

5. Do you think things will change between Anthony and his girlfriend in the next few years? How and why?

6. What do you think about the timing of these babies in Anthony's life and in his girlfriend's life?

7. As Anthony's case shows, life is complicated. Complications create problems, but they also open up possibilities. In a small group, discuss some of the ways Anthony could develop in exciting ways, as a young father, that would make his children's lives better and happier and his own life more interesting. Are there places he can turn to for help?

RESEARCH AND REPORTS

Ross D. Parke is professor of psychology at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. Douglas B. Sawin is assistant professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Texas in Austin. In the following article they discuss the role of fathering and recent studies in the field.

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"Fathers are a biological necessity but a social accident," Margaret Mead once observed. Contemporary women might take issue with this traditional image of the father as the helpless parent with little talent for or interest in child-rearing. They are likely to argue that the father is just as capable of caring for babies as the mother, and ought to at least share the burdens.

Interestingly, research by developmental psychologists tends to support their view. Our studies of fathers confirm that they are not a social accident at all. They contribute significantly to an infant's social and intellectual growth, although in ways that are different from the mother's. The father is not just a poor substitute for the mother; he makes his own unique contribution to the care and development of infants and young children.

Our observations began seven years ago, in Madison, Wisconsin, with the assistance of Sandra O'Leary, after we convinced reluctant maternity-ward personnel that fathers should be permitted to handle their newborns and not just admire them through a glass window. The fathers were allowed to join mothers and infants in their hospital rooms, where trained observers watched and recorded a wide variety of parenting behaviors in the first two days after delivery. We concluded that the fathers clearly were just as involved with their babies as the mothers — looking and smiling at them, holding and kissing.

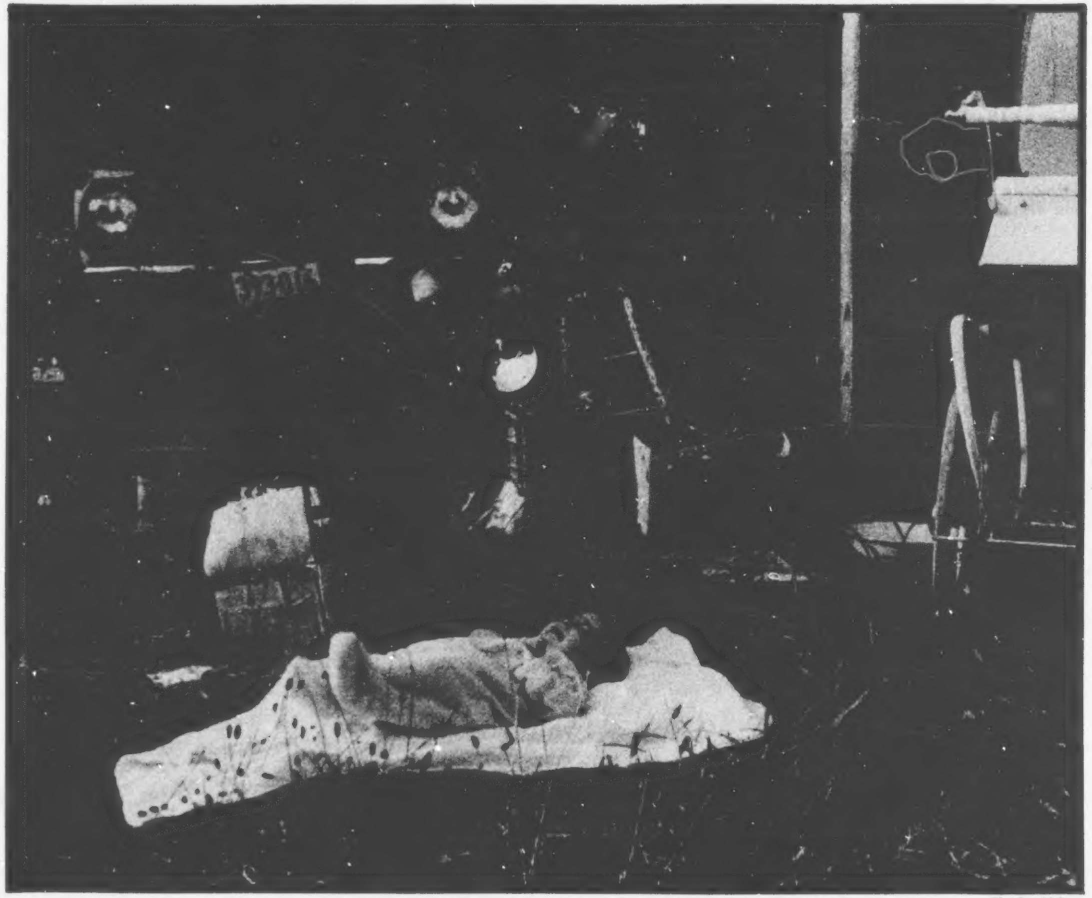
There were several questions that remained from this early study. First, since both mother and father were in the room, the high degree of father-infant interaction might have been due to the supporting presence of the mother, who might encourage the father's involvement and provide physical assistance and verbal instructions. Second, most of the fathers had attended Lamaze childbirth classes and had been present during the delivery. They therefore might have been more interested in their parental role and more likely to involve themselves with their infants than other fathers. Third, the men we observed were middle class and well educated; perhaps fathers in lower-income families, who tend to define parental roles more rigidly, would have behaved differently.

To address these questions, we next studied 82 lower-class fathers who had not participated in childbirth classes and were not present during delivery. Fathers and mothers were observed when they were alone with their infants and when both parents were present.

Again, the fathers were interested and active participants in the days after delivery. When alone with their infants, the fathers were just as nurturant and stimulating as the mothers. In fact, they were more likely than the mothers to hold the infants and to look at them. Mothers exceeded fathers in only one kind of stimulation — they smiled more at their babies, a difference that may simply reflect the established fact that women smile more often than men do in general.

Our studies also suggest that both mother and father show more interest in their baby when they are together with the infant. They both examine the infant more carefully (count toes, check ears, and so forth), and smile at him more.

Our subsequent studies have confirmed that fathers, when given the opportunity, become actively involved with their newborns. While mothers and fathers are equally involved with their infants, they are involved in different ways right from the start. When they have the chance, fathers are more visually attentive and playful (talking to the baby, imitating the baby), but they are less active in feeding and care-taking activities such as wiping the child's face or changing diapers. We considered the possibility that



Kathy Miles

mothers took over these duties simply because they were better at them. When we tested the hypothesis, we turned out to be wrong, as shown below.

In our view, parental competence is a question of how sensitively parents interpret, and react to, infant cues and signals. Success in caretaking and playing depends largely on reading the subtle changes in the infant's behavior correctly and reacting properly.

In feeding, for example, the parents' job is to make sure that the feeding process goes smoothly and that the infant receives enough milk. One way to measure how good a job parents are doing is to see how quickly they modify their behavior in response to the infant's distress signals: sneezing, coughing, or spitting up.

We found that mothers were only slightly more responsive, and that the amount of milk infants drank for their mothers was only slightly more than when their fathers were doing the feeding. Considering that mothers usually have had more contact with babies than fathers — as baby sitters, mothers' helpers, sisters, and so on — it seems that fathers do very well at the traditional feminine tasks of child care.

When we followed parents home and watched them interact with their children at the ages of three weeks and three months, we saw that differences between mothers and fathers persisted. Other researchers, using reports from parents on routine activities in the home, confirm these results. In a recent Boston study of middle-class families, mothers spent an average of one and one-half hours a day feeding their year-old infants, compared with 15 minutes for the fathers. Of course, most of them weren't around during the day. But that is not the only reason for the difference. Nearly half the fathers said that they had *never* changed the baby's diapers, and 75 percent said that they had no regular responsibilities for taking care of the child.

The birth of a baby seems to lead even egalitarian parents back to traditional roles. In a recent study of California couples, researchers found a marked return to the customary division of labor for a variety of functions, from decision-making to baby care and housework.

Other studies convince us that in most families, the father's main role is that of a playmate to the infant. Indeed, fathers spend four to five times as much time playing with their infants as taking care of them. Michael Lamb has found that fathers are also more likely to hold babies simply to play with them, while mothers are far more likely to hold them for caretaking purposes.

Fathers not only play more than mothers, but their style of communication and play is also different. Harvard pediatricians Michael Yogman, T. Berry Brazelton, and their colleagues recently explored these differences in detail by studying five infants from the ages of two weeks to six months. They observed how each child interacted with its mother, its father, or a stranger for two-minute periods. Through slow-motion analyses on video tapes, they made detailed records of the play patterns of various adults with the infants. They found that the mothers spoke softly, repeating words and phrases frequently, and imitating the infants' sounds. The usual pattern was what Yogman calls burst-pause: a rapidly spoken series of words and sounds, followed by a short period of silence.

The fathers were less verbal and more tactile than the mothers. They touched their infants with rhythmic tapping patterns more often than mothers or strangers. Father-infant play shifts rapidly from peaks of high infant attention and excitement to valleys of minimal attention, while mother-infant play includes more gradual shifts.

Observers have found the same differences in normal home situations for both infants and older children. Fathers engage in more physically arousing and unusual activities; for instance, such rough-and-tumble play as tossing the infant in the air. Mothers usually play conventional games, such as peekaboo. They also tend to stimulate their children verbally rather than physically.

In most cases, researchers have found, the infants' responses were more positive to play with their fathers than to play with their mothers. In one study, K. Alison Clarke-Stewart found that most children from seven to 30 months picked their fathers rather than their mothers as playmates.

How much and how well fathers interact with their infants has a strong effect on the child's development, particularly if the child is a boy. Babies as young as five months are more at ease in social situations when their fathers help take care of them and play with them. For example, they prove to be calmer and happier when left alone or with strangers. Perhaps egalitarian families not only share caretaking more, but also expose the infant to a variety of other people, so the child becomes accustomed to strangers. Cross-cultural studies tell a similar story: whether in Guatemala or Uganda, babies cope better with unusual social situations and strange people if the father is an involved parent.

John McGannon

Studies suggest that fathers and mothers contribute to their child's intellectual development in different ways. The father's greatest contribution to the infant's cognitive progress comes from the quality of his play with the child. In the case of the mother, it is her verbal stimulation that is the best predictor of the infant's cognitive level.

As fathers take greater responsibility for the care of their children, it becomes more important for them to do the job right. As far back as 1925, the national PTA was advocating that parenthood training be included in the high-school curriculum. It is still an excellent idea which is only slowly taking hold.

Hospitals are changing their visiting policies to give fathers more contact with their newborn infants. In New York City, 60 percent of the hospitals permit fathers to visit with their newborns. The importance of this change is highlighted by the innovative work of pediatricians Marshall Klaus and John Kennell of Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, who have provided evidence that the mother-infant attachment is strengthened by extended contact between the two immediately after birth. Some evidence from Sweden suggests that the same is true for fathers. In these studies, men who were given a chance to learn and practice basic caretaking skills right in the hospital were more involved in the care of the infant and in household tasks three months later.

One innovation that should be given wider support is paternity leave, not just immediately after birth but during pregnancy as well. Other suggested changes at the workplace that would permit a larger role for the father in infancy include shorter work weeks, more flexible working hours, and "split jobs" (in which father and mother each work part-time at a given job).

These and similar ideas would be all helpful to families that want such equality. In many families, though, increased participation by the father may cause conflict and disrupt family life by threatening well-established and satisfying roles. Our goal should be to acknowledge that the father makes an important contribution to infant care.

Fathers are clearly not forgotten. Nor is Mead's famous claim that "fathers are a biological necessity but a social accident" still valid. Fathers are alive, well, and playing an active and important role in infancy — a role that is likely to increase in the future.

QUESTIONS

1) This article suggests that there are several crucial things that a father contributes to a young infant's development. What are these? Can you think of any others? What does a father provide for a child past the infant stage?

2) What do you think might keep some fathers from doing the kind of direct care of their infants that this article suggests they are capable of? What would keep you from doing some of those same things?

3) The previous case studies in this unit have presented several fathers: Cheryl and Mary talk about John and Jimmy, and Mark, Sam, and Anthony each speak for themselves about their experiences as fathers. Compare the different ways in which these five fathers approach their role. Is there anything they don't appear to do that you think they should, or could? Is there anything that one or more of them are doing that you don't think they should be doing? Why? Is there anything they do that you think is good and maybe even necessary but that you are not ready or willing to do right now? later in your life?

4) How would you respond to the following statements, considering the five fathers above, the article you have just read, and your own feelings and experiences:

—"Changing diapers is woman's work."

—"A baby needs lots of direct care from its mother; a father's job is to keep the house together and the money coming in."

—"A man is just too clumsy to handle a young baby with the same care as a woman. That's why women have the babies, not men. It's instinctive for a woman to handle a child."

—"Feeding and burping a baby, and things like that, are boring to a man; women like it."

—"All this talk about both parents caring for the child and interacting with him or her is nice, but that's just not the way the world is. Someone has to work all day, and that someone is usually a man — particularly if the mother has to feed the baby. And there's no way to change that."

CASE STUDY

7

Linda and Ron Sturgis

"Two years of high school to go."

Linda is 17; Ron is 18. They were married when Linda learned she was pregnant at 16. Their child is one year old.

Ron:
Uh, I was 17 when we got married.

Linda:
I was 16 and about 16 weeks pregnant. I was a sophomore in high school and I was all set to drop out of school. I didn't want to finish very much. It was, it was Ron and my mother who insisted that I finish school.

Ron:
Yeah, I think an education's really important. If there was any time, you know, after Sara was born, she'd like to get a job and do something, it'd be harder to get a job if she didn't have a diploma. I graduated and I really would have liked to go to college, but my family probably wouldn't have been able to afford it anyway.

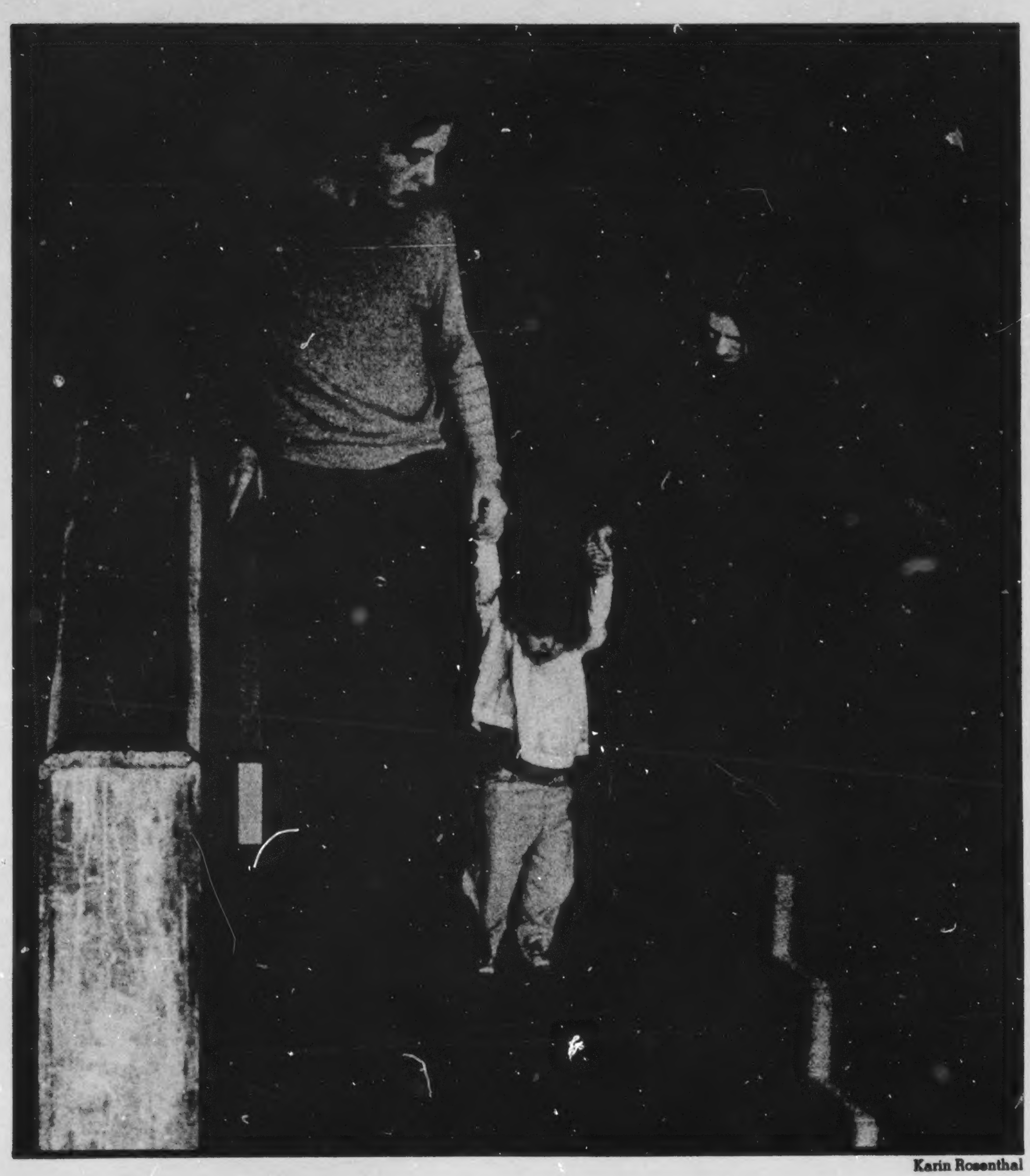
Linda:
It was really kind of hard to tell my parents that I was pregnant. I didn't want to hurt them, you know?

Ron:
Yeah. We decided we'd do it on this one night where Linda would come and have supper at my house. She came over and we went to go and tell my stepmother. First we asked if we could talk to her and we took her into the other room and sat down and she said, "You're pregnant, aren't you?" I thought she was going to be mad but she was actually pretty happy about it, but the only thing was that she was a little disappointed that we didn't tell her earlier. And then we borrowed the car and went over to Linda's.

Linda:
My parents were having this party and we tried to get their attention. We were following them all over the place just so, you know, we could get their attention for a minute. So finally I went downstairs and said, "Mom, Dad, we have to talk to you." They said, "Is it serious?" And I said, "Yeah, it's serious." And they said, "What is it?" So I said, you know, "We want to get married." And they said, "Oh, no, no, no, you're too young." And I said, "Mom, I'm pregnant." And she said, "No, you're not!" And I said, "Yes, I am!" Then we went upstairs where it was more private and we were talking. I thought my mom would have a nervous breakdown.

You see, I was the only girl in the family and I was really a pretty good student and I was just, you know, really kinda special to them. I was kind of the example to my two younger brothers, you know? And so it was really hard because they thought, they thought a lot of me and trusted me and all that. And I thought they were going to kick me out of the house and just have nothing to do with me.

They took, they took a little while to get over it. But then they said, you know, we'll help you with your decision and, and then they were just really super helpful. You know, they were really good. They helped us find an apartment and they helped us out with transportation and all because we didn't have a car.



Karin Rosenthal

Ron:
I guess my relationship with my parents isn't that great. I could talk to them but, well, my stepmother she's interested in what we're going to do. But she really can't help out with the money. I didn't write my dad 'til after we were married. He wasn't really mad, he just said, "Well, that's nice to know."

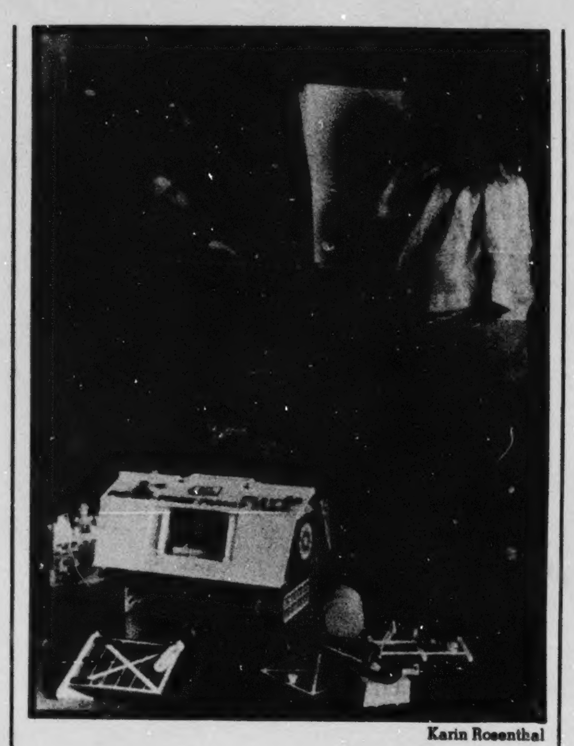
Linda:
Our hardest adjustment has been Ron getting laid off. The main problem was about money, you know, that's it.

Ron:
I'll find a job somewhere.

Linda:
You see we don't have any credit rating yet, and one of the hardest things is to get a credit rating when nobody will accept you.

Ron:
Yeah, we wanted to see this apartment but when the landlord found out we were just out of high school, he just said no.

Linda:
You know, it seems like all my old friends, my high school friends, they hardly ever come around. It seems like they're scared that if they get too close to you, you know, they'll get pregnant or something like that. I guess they're just busy with their own life. You know, they have completely different things to worry about than I do. I've got a husband, a baby, and a house and all that stuff. Somehow I just, I feel older than them now.



Karin Rosenthal

Ron:
There have been a lot of other changes. Before Sara was born if we wanted to go see a movie, even at midnight, we could just, you know, get up and go and we didn't have to worry about anybody else or anything. But now with the baby, if you want to go to movies, well, there's just a lot of things.

Linda:
You know, we have to find somebody to baby-sit and I have to get her supper and her bottle ready, and just a whole lot of things. It's just not, you know, the two of us anymore.

Ron:
I'm just kinda, I'm just the kind of person who likes to go and do a lot of stuff, but you know you can't do that anymore. I think we've both changed a lot. Linda's not the sweet little girl she used to be. I was just so used to her, you know, kind of being a little girl instead of . . . a woman.

Linda:
When we were just dating, I was all giggly, you know, and I acted really kind of weird and all that stuff. Now I don't know. I guess I don't giggle as much as I used to. I just feel completely different.

QUESTIONS

RESEARCH AND REPORTS

In her book, Worlds of Pain, *Lillian Rubin talks about the changes a baby can make in the lives of young couples.*

. . . Children born just months after the wedding added emotional as well as economic burdens to the adjustment process. Suddenly, two young people, barely more than children themselves, found their lives irrevocably altered. Within a few months — too few to permit the integration of the behaviors required by new roles in life stages, too few to wear comfortably even one new identity — they moved through a series of roles: from girl and boy, to wife and husband, to mother and father.

They often responded with bewilderment, filled with an uneasy and uncomprehending sense of loss for a past which, however difficult, at least was known . . . and an enormous well of fear about an unknown future . . . .

. . . As with all of us, however, such a welter of feelings are rarely recognized, let alone understood. At best, we are aware only that we're experiencing turmoil without knowing what it's about. One young mother expressed it well:

"All I knew was that I was churning up inside all the time."*

Most immediately, both wives and husbands knew that the fun and good times that had brought them together were gone — replaced by . . . the fearsome responsibilities of parenthood. No longer were they free to run around with the old crowd, to prowl the favored haunts, to go to a movie, bowling, or partying whenever the mood struck. Both wives and husbands were shaken as it quickly became clear that the freedom they had sought in marriage was a mirage, that they had exchanged one set of constraints for another perhaps more powerful one. They felt stuck — thrust abruptly into adulthood, unexpectedly facing the fear that their youth was behind them.*

Linda and Ron had a baby very early in their marriage. They were also younger than most parents are when they have their first baby.

- *How are their feelings similar to the couples described in* Worlds of Pain?
- *What do you think adds to, or lessens, the feelings of bewilderment, fear of the future, and a loss of freedom that many young, newly married parents seem to feel?*
- *What do you think couples like Linda and Ron gain by having a baby early in their marriage, while they are very young? What do such couples lose?*

*** Excerpted from *Worlds of Pain: Life in the Working-Class Family,* by Lillian Breslow Rubin, pp. 79-80. © 1976 by Lillian Breslow Rubin, Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, New York. Reprinted with permission.**

CASE STUDY

8

Carla Williams

"I did what a mother should do."

When Carla became pregnant at 16, she was not married to Timmer, the father of the baby. She decided to give the child up for adoption.

I went to get a pregnancy test. And when I found out, I just couldn't speak. The only thing that came into my mind is, "What's my mother going to say, what's my father going to say?" I don't know. "What's my grandmother going to say? What am I going to do?" Nothing about myself or about Timmer. Then when I got home, I started thinking. I don't know how he's going to react. I wasn't sure in that situation. I was scared that he would just leave me or something, but I didn't think he would. We were friends for a long time. And I called him the next day.

He came down. When I told him, he was amazing. He was, and he didn't run away. He said, "Okay, now we're in this position, and we'll have to deal with it," and he was so supportive. My parents and Timmer both said, "You have to carry it, you have to feel good with what you're doing. You have to make the final decision and we'll go along with whatever you say." I was very lucky.

I had some ideas in my mind what I wanted to do, but I didn't want to leave anything out, like leave any options, close any options to me without really thinking them through. Well, what my mind kept flipping from was whether to give it up for adoption or keep it, because the romantic side of having a baby and holding it in your arms and singing it to sleep and raising it, you know, that everything like, you know, giving the kid a good life and stuff, and being a good parent, all was so romantic and sometimes I just fell into that, but I usually stayed pretty consistent with my thoughts. And the adoption seemed like the most sensible thing to do. I couldn't think of the responsibility of a child and taking care of it, and having to feed it and clothe it when I could barely clothe and feed myself at the time. And, uh, it just slowly worked this way, that I decided to get, uh, put up for adoption.

At the time, I couldn't afford prenatal care. My parents were both broke. I didn't want to even ask them for money. Uh, I kept going all over the place trying to find some help. I went to a doctor once and got examined. Uh, I didn't go to the doctor that often. I felt good and I felt that it wasn't, you know, that I would know if something was wrong. I could feel it in myself if something was wrong. And when I did, I would go to the doctor's. Uh, the prenatal care was mostly me taking care of myself, you know, taking care of the baby nutritionwise and physically, and keeping my emotions together and that's how I took care of the baby.

I love sweets and I love fattening foods and carbonated drinks, and you name it, I love it. And, but I cut a lot of it out, I really cut a lot of it out. I didn't go crazy. I just tried to eat better, ate more fruit. Uh, if I ate bread, I would eat whole wheat bread, you know, grain bread, and just changed what I was eating. I would eat the same things but just change what it was made out of, and chemicals or the real thing, and cut down on candy and stuff like that. And I also stopped smoking when I found, when I found out I was pregnant, because my doctor, I went to my doctor and I asked him about, you know, things like smoking cigarettes, drinking, what, what, how does this affect the baby, and he gave me this very scientific explanation that I can't explain now. I understood then. And that was enough. I just quit then and there.

It was hard for me to say, "Now take care of yourself because of the baby," and look down and see a flat stomach in the beginning, you know? Just, "You're not pregnant," but, you know, the more and more, as I started looking like a pregnant woman, then I, I cut out more and more things and got more and more used to the idea that I'm not taking care of myself. I'm taking care of another person and it's infringing upon them to smoke and not eat right and stuff like that, so I just completely changed my habits.

Well, that was going on right before the baby was born, was, you know . . . Timmer who was living with me at the time, who was the father of the baby, uh, we were having a lot of troubles. He was having a hard time adjusting to this, this big belly and, and just the whole thing. It was just, it was just a very hard time, and we were talking about him leaving and not staying until the baby was born, and he finally left, and I just started smoking and smoking.

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Susan Wing

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It was past my due date already and there was just a lot of tensions and stuff like that, and I just, I can't explain what happened, I was just in a very bad uncaring frame of mind to myself, and towards everything that was happening, and I started smoking again. It was like a week, a week or two before the baby was born. I had really thought the worst for myself. I thought, well, you had to prepare yourself for being very emotional, being very upset, physically, emotionally drained, and it's gonna be hard.

But I felt really good. I didn't have any second thoughts in the hospital. I was glad I had the time. I took care of the baby. I fed it and I changed it and held it and sang to it and stuff in the hospital, and I was just very happy. I really, you know, understood that I couldn't take care of it and that somebody else could give it what I couldn't give it and I was very happy in fact.

Then, so my, the lawyer was talking about it and the way that he does it was that he has a flat fee for the parents who are adopting the baby. The whole adoption is set up for the woman who is pregnant, not for the parents who are adopting. I felt like if I'm gonna give this baby away, I have to give it to somebody who's gonna do better than I am, you know, better than I could do 'cause it's not, I'm not accomplishing anything if I'm not doing that. I said to him, "I just don't want to find out about this one couple. I want a couple of couples." And so he sent me some paper, some pages with, and four photographs of couples, what they were interested in, what their income was, how old they were, what their hobbies were, uh, what they did for, for, what their work was, how many years of school they had been in, and stuff like that. And I looked them over. I wanted to have a family that was gonna expose the baby to a lot of different things, a lot of different ideas and I was concerned about schooling and stuff like that, things that you can never promise with anybody but I was hoping that maybe I could get some kind of idea.

Uh, so I went through all these couples and I found one that they appealed to me by the description, the description I got. And I decided to pursue them. So they called me one night, and I talked to them. I talked to them about everything under the sun. I had lists of questions. And these were the people who eventually adopted the baby, and we talked a lot of times and they were just amazing people, just amazing. I just fell in love with them talking to them over the phone. They were a writing-producing team. They were rich in a way that I really admired. They had both sent themselves through college, graduate school. He became a professor, and they became a writing-producing team. And everything they had they had built themselves, which I admired very much. They had two other children, one that was 14, which she gave birth to. She can't have any more because she kept miscarriaging. Then they adopted a girl who at this time was seven years old. And I was just very impressed with these people and I said to them that I wanted to meet them. And they said, "Great."

And I went to their house and I just had a marvelous time. I got to see everything that they showed me all around. They, they gave me books that they had written and showed me all these documentary projects that they were starting on for television, and just fascinated me. The whole family was just so amazing and so loving and so understanding that it, it was a beautiful experience and, uh, I came back. I had told them before we left we all sat down to talk and I said, "I'm very happy with all of you, and, uh, you know, and if it's okay with you, I'd like you to adopt my baby." And it was, it was, it was just beautiful, you know? And it was just great, and I fell in love with the little, the little girl, and I gave her a big teddy bear at the, when I was at the hospital, my little teddy bear. Well, it's big, it's five foot or something, but I had it when I was a little kid and then I gave it to her, and I wrote to the boy and stuff like that.

And they all came out to the hospital when I had the baby. They were always, kept calling, they sent a telegram when I was in the hospital, "All our love," you know? They were just amazing people. When I gave it up, you know, it just, when I gave the baby over to them, I was very emotional and me and my mother and father were there, and they all sat there and cried.

I feel a lot wiser from, from the experience. I just feel much more older. I feel more, more, more, I don't know a good word for it. I feel like I know what my mistakes were and I know what not to do the next time, you know. If I do, if I decide to get pregnant again, and I feel it's essential for a baby to have a father, to have two parents. I think a situation where, first of all, where I'm, I have a permanent living situation with the father to take care of it. I think a mother would go nutsy alone. No, I'm serious. I had thoughts about raising that baby alone and me physically abusing it, which is nothing in my nature, but physically abusing it because just the intense situation of taking care of a baby 24 hours a day, and it's not on any time schedule that you like. It's when it needs to be fed, and needs to be changed, and I could just see really physically abusing that baby because I couldn't take it after a while. I'd also need a situation where I was financially well off, not well off but, you know, a situation where I'm in a place where I feel good and I can give my, give the child a good education and, and just, just give it a lot of things, you know? Because I think it's good to be, it's nice to be a good parent. It's good to be a good mother and stuff.

Uh, I hope the future is as good as now. I can't say for the future. Sometimes I, you know, I think about the baby, but I never think of wanting it there with me other than it would be just nice to see it, and, and, you know, talk to it or some, you know, it can't talk, but just spending time with it. But I never have any regretful feelings about giving it up for adoption. I feel very happy when I think about that, that I did that. Uh, I feel, I just feel I hope in the future I won't get upset about it. I feel there's no reason to. That's the point. I did what a mother should do.

QUESTIONS

RESEARCH AND REPORTS

Dr. Elizabeth M. Whelan, in her book A Baby? . . . Maybe, *discusses the amount of time and energy a baby can demand from his or her mother:*

Babies are not only lovable, they are also messy, demanding, impatient, and totally exhausting.

A 1950s study of new mothers found that the birth of the first child raised the number of housework hours from 32 to 68 a week. Presumably some of the work-savers that have entered our lives since that time would bring the number of hours down somewhat, but it is still pretty safe to say that motherhood can double the amount of time spent cooking, cleaning, clothing, and comforting. A significant amount of this time is borrowed from the husband-wife relationship, but other parts, if not taken from the wife's career schedule, are transplanted from what would be sleeping hours and her previous commitments out of the house. . . . A large group of mothers was once asked what was the most significant change in their lives since they returned from the maternity ward; the overwhelming cries were, "less freedom" and "I'm tied to the house!"*

Dr. Whelan suggests that "housework" more than doubles after a baby is born.

- *What specific things do you think could take so much time in caring for a baby? Perhaps you know some new parents you could talk with and get an idea of what they do and how many hours these new tasks take each day. What could make caring for an infant easier or harder? What personal factors in the lives of a mother and father might make a difference? What kinds of help from neighbors, family, friends, local service agencies could make a difference?*
- *In Carla's case, she would have been solely responsible for caring for her child. What additional demands does this make on her? Does this change your mind about her decisions in any way?*
- *Carla also says she would very much like to have a permanent situation with the father before raising a child. How important do you think fathers are in raising children? How often do you think fathers share the responsibility of caring for a baby? Are they involved in other ways? Should they share the responsibility for physical care of the baby more than they do, or do fathers already*

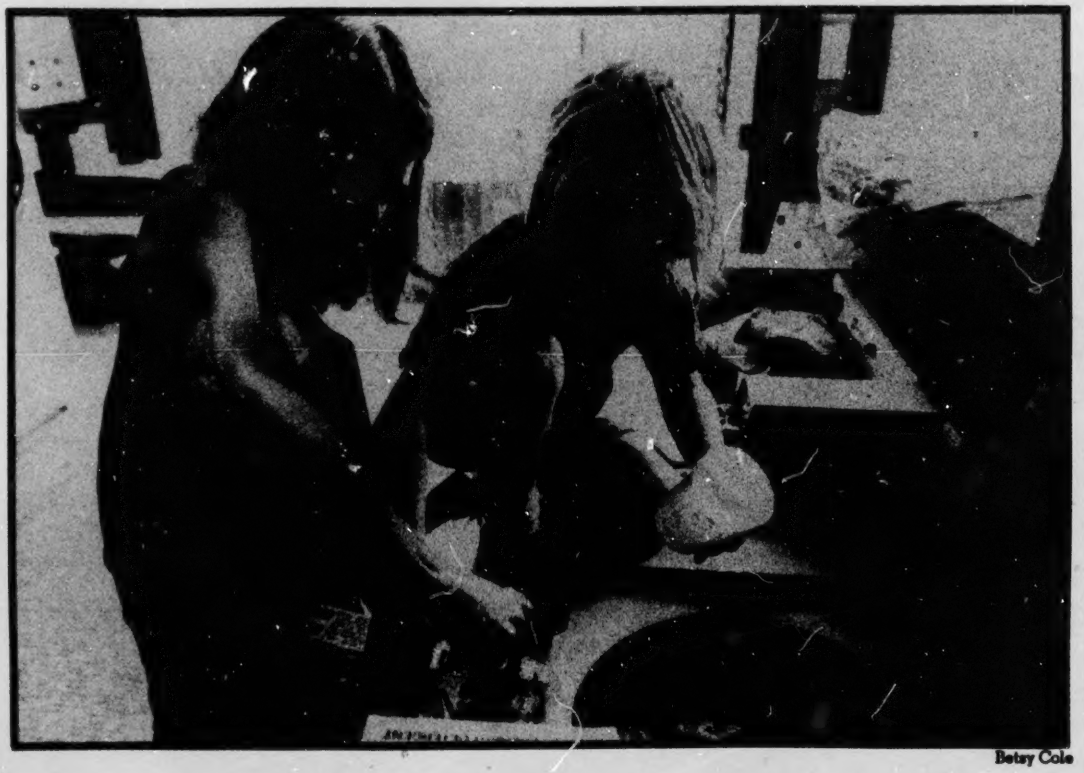
*** Whelan, Elizabeth, *A Baby? . . . Maybe,* New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1975, p. 108**

have different demands that fill their time? What arrangement for child care would you like to see in your own life, with your future partner?

Dr. Whelan also discusses how important the decision to have a child is:

. . . The changes a child brings to a couple's life can be very significant. Children are dependents. . . . It is you who will be taking care of them. His or her wants will take priority over yours. But probably most sobering of all, children are not returnable. You can have an ex-wife, ex-husband, ex-job, but you cannot have an ex-child. The result of your decision, in other words, is not only unpredictable, it is irrevocable. That is why it's the most fateful decision of your life.[**]

As you read the following two case studies, consider what would make a couple decide not to have any children, or to have a second or third child.



Betsy Cole

[**] Ibid, p. 14.

CASE STUDY

5

Susan and Bob Reynolds

"We are our own family."

Susan talks about why she and her husband Bob have decided not to have children. They have been married five years and are both 30.

My parents don't understand us. Neither do several of our good friends. They say it's abnormal, or selfish. Or they ask why we got married anyway if we knew we didn't want children.

Why is it so hard to understand that we got married because we love each other? And because we wanted to build a life together, or a home together, for as far into the future as either of us could imagine? There are a thousand things we like to do together, and probably even more things that we're planning to do in the time ahead. And picturing a baby, or having children growing up all around us in any of those situations, just doesn't help the picture at all — the way we see it, it's just not anything we really want.

Let me give you an example. Bob and I love to shop together; well, just going through the supermarket watching all the parents with kids trying to keep their kids from getting into trouble, or knocking over a display, or crying without the parents being able to stop them would really ruin an experience even as small as that for us. Not to mention having to lug around all the stuff like strollers and baby bottles and things all the time. Or finding a baby sitter every time we wanted to go out.

Well, things like that would make me nervous. And I don't think I'd have the patience for it. I get angry sometimes just watching other people's kids demand all that attention — and causing all this trouble — for them. And I think I'd get angry at my own kids, if I had any, when they did this kind of stuff. I mean, I like to do things in my own time in my own way, and so does Bob. We're really good to each other, and we do things for one another. But neither of us think we would want to make the continuous effort, or what would feel to us like the continuous effort, to be always considering what a kid wants or needs.

This may all sound really selfish, but we figure it's less selfish than having a kid and resenting them. Or putting lots of additional pressures on our own relationship, which is really good the way it is. A lot of people seem to have kids just to keep them company, or to give themselves something to do. Well, Bob and I are already good company for each other. And I don't think we'll ever run out of things we want to do. Together.

You see, life looks really great to me and to him. We are our own family, just the way we are. We know what we've got. We know we can deal with it, and be happy. So we don't really want to change it. But people so often come up to us, ask if we have any kids, and then just seem to frown or look sorry when we say no. It's almost like we have to explain ourselves to them, and to sort of say, "We know we always will be happy this way." Well, we will be, particularly if everybody doesn't keep thinking of us as "odd."

Jerry Howard

QUESTIONS

CASE STUDY

10

Nicholas and Jill Silwicki

"Because we enjoyed the first one."

Parents of a three-year-old daughter, Nicholas and Jill decide to have a second child.

Nicholas and I were both 30 and had been married three and a half years when we decided to have Rachel. We had a baby then for lots of reasons. We knew each other well enough to risk adding a third person to the relationship, and we already had done things we probably couldn't do with a young child, like bicycling in Europe for six weeks. We also figured out that we didn't have to settle down to have a baby — it looked like we always would want to move from place to place and job to job, and we decided that if that was a good life for us, it could be a good life to share with children too.

At that time, I was working in an office where three different women had babies in the first year I was on the job. They kept working and even brought their babies to the office. That reassured me it was possible to have kids without being trapped at home. Some of our close friends were considering having kids, and I'm sure that had a big influence on us. We also knew a grandchild would be good news to both of our mothers, who were widowed and alone at the time. So all of these things came together. But most of all, we just felt we wanted a baby.

While I was pregnant, it was hard for us to imagine the reality of having a baby. Sometimes we were very excited, and sometimes we panicked at the irreversible change that was about to come to our lives. I guess no other decision you make is as undoable as having a baby. We went on a four-day canoe trip before the baby was due so that we could share some precious time alone together doing something we probably wouldn't get to do again for a while.

When Rachel was born, we felt so close and shared such a joy that I can't even describe it. She seemed bright and beautiful to us right from the beginning. Nicholas was in the hospital almost all the time. He spent hours making birth announcements, and we talked for several days before we finally felt we had the right name. We couldn't wait to be home alone together, and Nicholas even slept on the floor of my room the last night! It was three years ago, but I remember each golden moment of it.

Of course, the first day she was home she cried and we couldn't stop her. I guess that happens to almost everyone. But that was the beginning of many times of being frustrated, feeling like a failure, and resenting having to deal with this intrusion in our life in the first place.

There were many things that had to change for us with a baby. My time was no longer my own. I may have been able to do almost the same things I had always done, but I never could plan on *when* I could do them or *how much* time I'd have to spend. I had to find levels of patience, self-control, and unselfishness that I didn't know I had in myself. But the point is that our lives *did* change. We stopped fighting it. Rachel no longer seems like an intrusion; she is a central part of our lives now. And if our life is more of a hassle because of her, it is also filled with more joy than it ever could have been without her.

For example, when she was 20 months old, we took her camping and backpacking. True, it was harder at the end of a day when we were tired and hungry to deal with her tiredness, or to have to sing and tell stories to humor her just as I was climbing the steepest part of a mountain. But when she learned to identify "chickmunks live inna hole," "big horn sheep," "mushrooms" or "Athabasca River," or looked over a scene exclaiming "fagulous," our pleasure more than made up for the difficulties. Parents complain that kids rob them of time together, but having a child can improve the quality of your time together so much. You tell each other how she gave you a backrub for the first time, or how she laughed at your actions, or stopped crying when you rocked her. Or you have a problem to work on together, like why she bursts into tantrums and what to do when she does. It just makes you very close.

We're expecting another baby now, and to me that's an affirmation that we feel having kids is a joy. True, there are worries again. Some people say two are four times as much work. Nicholas can't stand kids picking on each other, so we worry about sibling rivalry. We especially wonder how Rachel, who is used to all our attention and often demands a lot of it, will adapt to having to share us. We've talked to her (she'll be three when the baby comes) about the baby and tried to prepare her gradually. But if it's hard for us to visualize having another child, how can she begin to have a realistic idea of what it will be like. One day she said, "When the baby comes, it can sleep on my mattress, next to me, and I can push it in a carriage," and I was delighted that she wanted to share her life like that.

John McGannon

Deciding to have a second baby was just as big a decision as deciding on the first. Why did we decide to do it again? Nicholas says, "Because we enjoyed the first one." He came from a family of five kids and, while they remember lots of squabbles as kids, they are each other's best friends now. I was an only child, and I feel I missed something by not having brothers or sisters.

And another thing. It's ironic, but just when Rachel is beginning to be more independent and I feel like I'm my own person again, I start longing for a little dependent being. I have a very strong urge to be a better mother this time, more patient and loving, less resentful of the baby's dependence, less easily enraged about crying. I guess I want a second chance. Of course, I can't just correct the mistakes I made with Rachel, because this will be a whole new kid with its own demands and problems. And we want another baby out of curiosity to see what this next one will be like. Rachel has been a continuous wonder to us. When we imagine the next baby, we often picture a reproduction of her. But the thought that it will be an entirely new experience is mind blowing.

QUESTIONS

Did You Know?

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

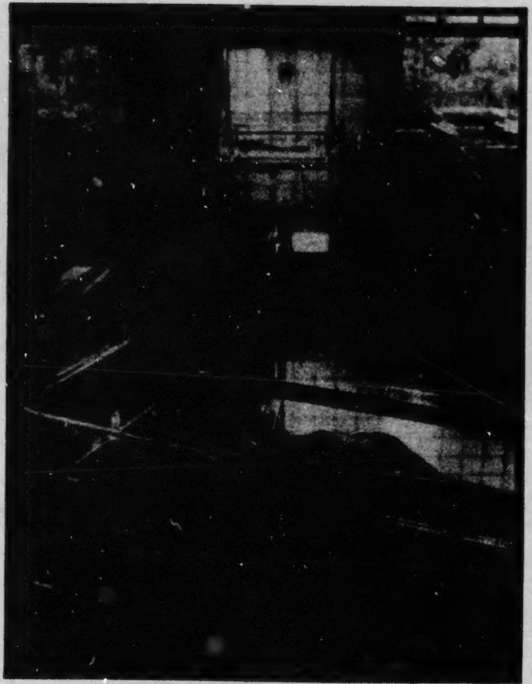
[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

These facts were taken from "11 Million Teenagers: What Can Be Done About the Epidemic of Adolescent Pregnancies in the United States," The Alan Guttmacher Institute, New York, 1976.

Becoming A Parent: Surprises, Joys And Struggles



Kathy Miles

The cases of these people all deal with a common theme — the impact a baby would have, or does have, on their lives. Having children was a big event for all of the people who decided to have them. Yet becoming a parent is a unique experience for each person. It affects them differently, depending on their ages, their personalities, their relationships with the other parent, their economic and personal security, and their hopes and expectations for themselves and their children. Each parent has gained something by having a child, and each has had to give up something. A baby is a beginning and a change. Some of these changes come as surprises that only experience can make known to a parent. Some bring incredible happiness, and some cause amazing irritation and even hardship.

Discussing The Case Studies

1. Choose the single case that interested you most. What has been gained, in the parent's opinion, by the baby's arrival? What has been sacrificed or is about to be sacrificed? What did the parents plan for when they thought about having a baby, or not having one? How are they planning for the future? What was completely unexpected or a surprise to them? How did they react to the surprise? Write these questions down one at a time. After each question, write a very short response. Then try to find a quote from your case to support your feelings about this parent. Write the quote beside your response to each question.

2. Now form a small group with the other students who chose the same case. (If you are the only one to select a case, sit with another group and make comparisons between the two cases.) Select one student to take notes while the group discusses these and other questions. First look over all your responses and the quotes with them. Then consider:

- What positive and negative feelings are the parents having about the baby?
- What new ways of thinking and acting have the parents tried because of this change?
- What things made it easier or harder for the parents to get used to the new baby? What effect did the following have:
  - the parents' ages
  - their relationship with each other
  - their financial situation
  - the time they had spent together before the baby arrived or was expected
  - the differences in the ways babies change the lives of fathers and mothers (and especially this father and this mother)
  - the planning or lack of it and sense of timing in their lives.
- What could have made the changes easier for the parents? Note any disagreements within the group, but try to come to a general agreement by talking through differences of opinion.

3. Come together as a whole class. Let the student taking notes for each small group speak for his or her group. Either on the board or on large sheets of paper, list all groups' reactions to the questions. Discuss any different responses that come from considering the different cases.

4. Several parents said they "never expected" something, or "never knew that before." Make a list entitled "Nobody Ever Told Me . . . ." Note all the things young parents probably don't expect, but need to know about. Use these cases for information, but also add anything you have learned from friends, relatives, or neighbors who are parents of young children.

5. The roles of men and women differ in all these cases, but there is also great variety *among* the men and *among* the women in the roles they expect to take, want to take, and actually take. The famous anthropologist, Margaret Mead, recently wrote that women's liberation too often has set up unnecessary hostility between men and women. She said, "What we should begin to realize is that both men and women need liberation from a lifestyle that is . . . destructive to both. . . ." What do you think she meant by liberation, and what do you think are liberating roles? Which of these parents, men and women, act in liberated ways for themselves, for their mates, and for their children? Find some examples and quotes to make your points.

6. Remember your time line? Remember the average age for mothers to have their first baby — around 20? Try to imagine you are 20 years old, and are considering getting married and/or having a baby. In diary form or as a short story, write the thoughts that are going through your head and the feelings you are having — about having a baby, about your potential husband or wife, about the other important things in your life. You may or may not want to reveal your decision in the diary or story, but do include all the evidence you would need from all sides to make that decision. You will obviously have to make up and fill in certain details about your job, financial status, boyfriend or girlfriend, plans for education, and so on. Use your time line for ideas; use the cases for realistic material.

Dr. Neil Macintyre of Case Western Reserve Medical School is a doctor who has counseled parents of handicapped children for many years. He talks about parents' investment in children.

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I think having a baby is a tremendously ego-involving thing. Nothing can top that in human behavior, as far as being personally ego-involving. When two people, loving one another, get together to produce a baby, their child represents an extension of themselves into the future — with a personal, emotional, physical, and biological input from each one of them. For a couple like that, looking forward to the birth of their baby, that baby has to be the best baby they can have. For them, there is no question about that, because the baby literally represents in their minds the very best in each of them, put together in what is going to be a magnificent joining of their best physical qualities, and eventually their best emotional and psychological qualities. As I said, the baby will be an extension of themselves into the future. And when you think about it, a baby does represent the most solid kind of immortality available to any human being. A baby is an immortality you can see, touch, feel, love, educate.

And this child, with all this goodness in it, representing the best of you, is going then to produce beautiful babies of its own, and on and on. And you will live on, not only biologically, which is a fact in terms of your genetic input, but philosophically, in terms of ideas, live on and on. I don't know that many people really think about that specifically, but I am convinced that the great majority of people really feel that kind of feeling. Whether they put it into words or not.

RESEARCH AND REPORTS

Dr. Marshall Klaus is Professor of Pediatrics, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, Cleveland, Ohio. The following article on bonding and attachment in the first days of life was excerpted from a speech given by Dr. Klaus at the 1977 National Conference of the National Alliance Concerned with School-Age Parents.

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There have been a number of exciting developments in the field of attachment and bonding over the past few years. A great number of these studies and observations have great relevance to new parents — both mothers and fathers — and how they react during the first few days or weeks of a baby's life.

First of all, I would like to define what I mean by attachment and bonding. Each of us has perhaps 300 to 400 acquaintances, but we are bonded to only a small number of people. If somebody down the street dies, somebody who you might have known for years, but you only see when you collect for the local fund drives (or at large neighborhood get-togethers) you're upset when they die. But you don't go through a prolonged period of mourning and grief. However, if one of these individuals is "special" in your life, such as a father, mother, sister, brother, husband, wife, or your child, you go through mourning and grief for six to twelve months. Even after this your life is not the same. The very close affectional ties that you feel for such a person represents the strength of feeling that I mean when I use the words "attachment" and "bonding."

Such relationships are deeper, and very different, from your relationship to the majority of people around you, whom I prefer to call acquaintances.

One of the deepest attachments and bonds that people establish is that between a parent and his or her child. Now, for 50 years people have been interested in how the infant becomes attached to the father and mother, and there is considerable work on this subject. But I would like to talk about the process in the opposite direction: how do a father and mother develop close attachment to the infant? There has been a great deal of work in this area in the past few years, and much of what I am about to discuss represents studies that have not yet been fully published, or are still on-going.

Many of these studies are based on detailed results from animal studies that have been going on for the past 15 years, and I would like to bring up one such study as a background for what I am about to say. If you take a baby lamb away from its mother in the *first* minute of life and bring it back 15 minutes later, the mother will beat or destroy the baby 40 percent of the time — not all of the time, but 40 percent of the time. If you leave the mother and baby together for the first 5 minutes and then make a separation of 10 or 15 minutes, the mother takes the baby back without any abuse, but often she takes babies from other ewes as well. In other words, she does not distinguish between her own and other babies. If you leave the mother together with her baby for 15 minutes after birth, she will only take back her own baby. There is a period during the first minutes of life that appears to be critical in establishing a bond of identification and feeling between the mother and her baby.

The big question now is, "Is there in the human mother and father a period during the first few minutes and hours and days of life where it's crucial or helpful that the father and mother be close to the baby?" Recent studies seem to demonstrate that the answer to this question is "Yes," and that both parents need to touch and interact with the baby as well as see it in order to increase the beneficial, positive feelings of bonding between parent and child.

Let's look at some of the most recent studies. These studies were conducted in the United States, Britain, Sweden, Guatemala, and Brazil — in fact, throughout the world. One study allowed mothers to spend one extra hour with their infants right after birth, and five extra hours per day for the first three days after birth. A control group of mothers spent the normal amount of time with their babies, or about 16 or 17 hours less than the extra contact group. All the mothers were randomly chosen from the same population. Let me give you some of the differences between the extra contact group and the control (normal time) group:

1. At the end of one month, extra contact mothers did not want to leave their baby with anyone, and stood near the examining table during a stressed office visit.

2. When the baby was made to cry, experimental mothers given the 16 extra hours soothed the baby significantly more than the control mothers.

3. The mothers were then filmed feeding their babies with a bottle, and the two groups of mothers fed their babies differently. Mothers who had extra contact spent significantly more time looking at the baby

Jerry Howard

"... both parents need to touch and interact with the baby ... to increase the beneficial, positive feelings of the bonding ..."

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and aligned their faces in the same parallel plane as the baby's, so if the baby's head was tipped, they would tip their heads.

4. Mothers who had extra contact spent significantly more time fondling the baby.

5. At one year, all the mothers were brought back and the same observations were made. Mothers with extra contact spent significantly more time soothing the baby when a blood test was taken.

6. At two years, the two groups of mothers spoke to their children differently. Mothers who had extra contact used significantly more adjectives, adverbs; half as many demands and twice as many questions. Let me give you an example of the difference in speech. Mothers who had extra contact would say to their child in the playroom, "Would you like to come over here and play with the pretty red ball?" The other mother said, "Come over here."

A Swedish study allowed experimental mothers 15 or 20 minutes extra skin-to-skin contact with their babies during the first 30 minutes after delivery. From that point on, both experimental and control mothers were given the same amount of contact with their baby. In other words, we are talking about a total time difference of 15 or 20 minutes in the two groups. Mothers and fathers were then visited in their homes three months later. Here are some of the differences between the two groups:

John McGannon

"... Mothers who had extra contact spent significantly more time looking at the baby and aligned their faces in the same parallel plane as the baby's ..."

1. Mothers who had extra contact spent significantly more time kissing the baby and, as in the earlier study, more time lining their faces up in the same parallel plane as their child.

2. Babies who had extra contact spent significantly more time smiling and significantly less time crying.

In a study of 300 babies in Tennessee, experimental mothers were given a total of 12 hours additional contact with their babies during the first two days of life. After one year, nine of the babies in the control group were battered, failing to thrive, or given up for adoption; only one baby in the extra contact mothers was in this same category. Further, there were significantly more hospitalizations and accidents in the control group babies when compared to the extra contact babies.

In Sweden 30 fathers were given their baby nude for 30 minutes during the second day of life. When these fathers were compared three months later to a similar group of fathers who had not been given the chance to hold their babies nude during this time, the fathers who had had this extra *half-hour* of contact early in the baby's life spent much, much more time with the baby than did the control fathers. Studies such as these indicate that close, early contact is as helpful for father-bonding as mother-bonding to infants, and supports other studies of fathers that show the nurturing potential of fathers with their infants. One such study left fathers alone on the second day with their babies and compared what the fathers did with what the mothers did. Fathers do exactly the same as mothers — they touch in the same way, they talk to their babies in the same way (including a higher pitch in the voice), and in general showed no significant differences in their behaviors. However, when the mother comes in, the father's behavior changes.

What do these studies and ones like them show? What do they tell us about the bond that develops between parent and infant, and about our own practices in handling the newborn and his or her parents? First, present data suggest that there may be a special period in the first minutes and days of life where it's terribly important for the mother and father to be close to their baby. And what have we pediatricians been doing? Immediately after delivery we take the baby away from the mother because we think we're better at judging whether it's sick or not. We wash the baby, dry the baby, and then . . . put it into a brightly lit, noisy nursery with other babies. Well, it's obvious this has to change . . . . We know of hospitals in this country where there are thousands of deliveries and full-term babies never go out to their mothers because it's too much trouble. The babies are all fed in the nursery.

Second, all fathers should be permitted into every nursery because they are a member of the family and should be part of the family. One of the questions that all of the research workers who are in this area ask is, "Can we change the life of a woman and a man at the time of the birth experience?" For example, should fathers live right with mothers in the first two or three days after childbirth? When we do this in our hospitals, they become much, much closer together. Each couple is a certain distance from each other and during the birth experience they can either become widely separated or they can develop a much closer relationship. And this is much more likely if the parents share this experience during the earliest moments, and if they can both come into direct contact with their new infant at the start. In such a case we are talking about parent-to-parent bonding as well as infant-to-parent bonding, with the hope of strengthening and deepening both.

RESEARCH AND REPORTS

Dr. Lee Salk is an authority on parent-child relationships. In his book, "Preparing for Parenthood," he discusses the range of feelings parents can have when a baby is born and they assume responsibility for its care.

It is important for you to know that becoming a parent will change every aspect of your daily life and that it will precipitate many emotional changes as well. More specifically, it will be absolutely impossible for you to come to terms with pregnancy, childbirth, and caring for your baby without understanding that there are going to be problems and difficulties and that you will have to face them. Too many people have a stereotyped picture of parenthood which emphasizes the joys and de-emphasizes the potential problems. For this reason, many people soon find themselves disappointed by parenthood, and some are even overwhelmed. Parenthood is one of the most important, if not the most important, role a human being can take on in life, and yet it is frequently the role people have had the least amount of training for. In particular, they have little or no preparation for the emotional impact of parenthood. Since we human beings purport to place such value on human life, and since our children represent the life of the future, it seems incredible that in our society so little information concerning the responsibilities of parenthood is available.

. . . At times, you may be overjoyed that you will become a parent, but your reactions will not be all delight and happiness. However it occurred — whether you tried hard to conceive, or whether it came about in an unplanned way, or even if it happened just the way you wanted it to — you should still expect a lot of mixed feelings, and you will soon want answers to an enormous number of questions. . . .

Day-to-day life with a newborn baby will be quite a departure from what your life was like before. While everyone knows this intellectually, the reality still comes as a shock when you are actually faced with the practicalities. To begin with, your time will be less your own now than it ever was. And you will have more to do than ever before . . . .

Having a baby in your home requires a maximum of flexibility, a lot of energy, and great patience. Although some of your plans and preparations may go down the drain, I still think it's a good idea to make those plans. It really is helpful to have some general idea about how you plan to cope with your baby's care. . . .

Although I am inclined to believe that many persistent and unrelenting post partum depressions may be due to a basically negative attitude to having a child in the first place, I am absolutely sure that wanting the baby does not preclude periodic feelings of anger, hostility, and rejection, even in emotionally healthy parents.

. . . feelings of frustration caused by the responsibilities of child care often periodically overwhelm parents. They do so because parental responsibilities and the problems parents cope with are very real. Recognizing this is the first step toward coming to terms with your feelings of frustration when they occur. If you deny these feelings, or attribute them to emotional problems, you will only feel guilty. You may then repress your feelings and at some other time they could erupt so forcefully that you could not control them. It's far better to know that having a child is at times a burden . . . Even good parents are exposed to these periodic feelings since they occur in all parents.*

*** Lee Salk, *Preparing for Parenthood,* New York: David McKay Company, 1974, pp. 2-3, p. 126, p. 105. Reprinted by permission of the David McKay Company, Inc.**

The First Nine Months Of Life

One Doctor's Notes On Pregnancy

As we have seen, there are many different conditions under which a baby can be said to begin his or her role in a family. Sometimes the family plans far in advance; sometimes a particular time just "feels right" for having the baby. Often the baby comes along without advance consideration, and the family adjusts to this as it happens.

One thing is common with all babies, however. All babies begin their physical development with the same event, the joining of a woman's egg and a man's sperm. This is called *fertilization* or *impregnation.* It is from this physical joining of the man's sperm and the woman's egg that all babies begin to develop. At this point, the woman is *pregnant,* and the fertilized egg develops inside her.

The following questions and answers about pregnancy were developed by an obstetrician-gynecologist (a doctor who specializes in the health of women).

Jerry Howard

How Does A Woman Know She's Pregnant?

Some women have no signs of pregnancy for several weeks. The first significant sign of possible pregnancy is when an expected menstrual period does not occur. The longer the period is delayed, the more likely that this woman is pregnant. A lot of women have an idea they may be pregnant because their breasts become unusually tender or sore at the time of the missed period. But this is not a certain sign, because some women have very sensitive breasts just before each menstrual period. Enlargement of the breasts, however, is a likelier indication of pregnancy. Other signs are that the woman may feel nauseated (although many do not), and/or may suddenly feel tired and need more sleep.

How Does A Woman Find Out If She Is Pregnant?

Two weeks after a woman has not had her period at the expected time (six weeks after her last period), she can have a quick, simple, and inexpensive test to find out if she is pregnant. The pregnancy test requires a urine sample, to which chemicals are added. This sample can be checked in a matter of minutes in the doctor's office or in a medical lab, and the result will be reported to the woman: "positive" if she is pregnant, "negative" if she is not.

Where Can A Woman Go To Get A Pregnancy Test?

A pregnancy test is quite simple, and can be done in a variety of places:

- A woman can go to her family doctor, and ask him or her to perform the test or recommend someone who can.
- She can go directly to an obstetrician/gynecologist. These doctors can be located through friends, through her family doctor, through any hospital or clinic, or by looking through the phone book.
- A woman can go directly to the outpatient clinic of a nearby hospital or clinic, and have the test done there.
- She can look up the phone number for her local or state public health department, or her local or state chapter of the American Medical Association. They will help by identifying a nearby doctor, hospital, or clinic. Many hospitals and clinics have designed procedures that are quick and that insure confidentiality for the women receiving the test.

Once a woman knows she is pregnant, what does that mean exactly? What is happening inside her body during the next nine months? What might she need to know about the prenatal process to insure that her baby gets the best care before it is born? The following section describes the process of growth from impregnation to birth.

Nine Months To Grow In

The First Week Of Life

A life so small it can't be seen

Mother

Neither parent can be sure that fertilization has occurred during these first seven days. There is no way that either the father or the mother can be aware of what is happening.

Conception occurs when one sperm of the many millions ejaculated by the male penetrates the egg of the female. The genetic blueprint that will guide the development of this fertilized egg into a baby is already set. The fertilized egg is invisible to the naked eye.

During the first seven days (third week after last menstrual period) the fertilized egg divides and redivides, and becomes a ball of cells, moving down the fallopian tube toward the uterus or womb. Different cells are beginning to behave in different ways, depending on what organs they are forming.

Embryo

The genetic makeup of the infant is set. (sex, coloring, body shape, etc.)

Cells that will become different organs (eyes, heart, lungs, etc.) already behave differently.

Almost half of all fertilized eggs never make it beyond this stage.

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* All technical terms are found in the glossary at the end of this book.

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Fourth Week After Last Menstrual Period

My period didn't come and I had always been very regular. So I started thinking I might be pregnant.

Mother

A late menstrual period does not always mean pregnancy. Some women may experience slight bleeding during their regularly scheduled menstrual period, but do not have a "real" period. They could be pregnant without the usual clues.

Implantation occurs when a fertilized egg attaches itself to the lining of the womb, where it receives nourishment from blood cells.

Embryo

The fertilized egg grows very rapidly, doubling its size every 24 hours. But it is still barely visible to the naked eye.

The cells continue to develop specialized shapes and functions.

The fertilized egg is now called an embryo. It is about 1/12 inch long.

The backbone, nervous system, spinal cord, and eyes begin to form.

The heart begins to beat.

Sixth Week

I was two weeks overdue on my period, but had been irregular before.

Mother

The mother doesn't look pregnant at all. She may not know for sure unless she has been tested. She may tell the father about the possible pregnancy, or she may wait for the test results.

Her menstrual period is now two weeks overdue. This may be the first time, or it may have happened before when she wasn't pregnant. Irregular menstrual periods without pregnancy are common for adolescent girls, and sometimes for older women.

This is the earliest time when a pregnancy can be diagnosed by a laboratory test: the mother's urine now contains a hormone put out by the placenta — the material connecting the embryo to the wall of the womb. When a sample of her urine is mixed with a chemical, the presence of this hormone will show up if she is pregnant. The test takes only a few minutes. It is very accurate.

There are other clues that she may be pregnant. She may feel nauseous when she wakes up in the morning, and she may vomit. Her breasts may be growing large, and she may need to urinate more often. She may feel tired and wish to nap in the afternoon. It's time for her to see a doctor to make sure.

Embryo

The embryo is now about ¼ inch long, the size of a pencil eraser.

The embryo has grown tremendously since conception. It is now 10,000 times bigger than it was at first.

The embryo is now made up of three layers of cells, each different from the others. If the embryo continues to grow, the outer layer becomes skin, hair, nervous system. The middle layer forms muscles, bones, blood vessels, kidneys, and sex glands. The inner tract becomes the digestive tract, lungs, and urinary system.

The head is forming. Arms and legs begin to develop.

By the end of six weeks after conception the outer layer has folded over to make a tube: the spinal canal. The brain forms at one end and begins increasing in size. The spinal cord and entire nervous system are forming.

Depressions where eyes and ears will appear are visible.

End Of Second Month

My breasts got very sensitive, and I was tired a lot, even in the afternoons.

Mother

The mother has missed her period for the second time. Pregnancy is hard to deny to herself, but nothing shows to others. She may have gained a few pounds.

Ordinary chores may now require more effort; she may need help now from the father, family, and friends with her daily routine.

The mother's womb is getting larger to make room for the developing baby, which is now called a fetus. By doing a pelvic exam, a doctor can feel that the womb is now enlarged to twice its normal size.

Embryo

The embryo, growing very fast, is about one inch long and looks human. All the structures that will be present when the baby is born have been formed, or have begun to form.

This part of pregnancy, when all these structures are developing, is the time when the embryo is most vulnerable to damage from its environment.

A skeleton begins to form, but it is soft cartilege, not hard bone.

Fingers and toes develop. The embryo kicks now, but too softly for the mother to feel.

The features of the face become clearer, more definitive.

Ears develop on the head. The brain is growing, and by the end of this month, the brain will begin to function and to direct the embryo's first movements.

Fingers separate on the hands. By the end of this month, the embryo can touch its face.

The Third Month

I began to have this funny feeling inside me.

Mother

Sometimes the mother has a feeling that is hard to describe of a delicate, fluttering "something" happening inside her. If she has been pregnant before, she may be able to identify this feeling as the movement of the baby in the uterus. Or she may not recognize what is happening or be able to describe it to anyone else.

Sometimes the mother has heartburn and trouble with her breathing. She may be getting over her nausea if she had experienced any.

Her uterus is the size of an orange.

Embryo

The embryo weighs about one ounce.

Bones harden.

The embryo squints, opens mouth, purses lips.

Arms, legs, hands, feet, fingers and toes are fully formed. Nails appear. Fingers can form fists.

The embryo moves vigorously, and by the end of the month, it can kick, swim, and somersault.

The Fourth Month

I can feel it move inside me.

Mother

By the end of this month, the mother knows that she feels the baby moving.

The mother has gained enough weight — 8 to 10 pounds — to make a difference in the way she looks. Her belly sticks out. Her clothes may be too tight, and she will start to wear maternity clothes. She looks pregnant.

During this month or next, the mother probably will begin to stand and walk differently — leaning back a little to balance the way her belly sticks out in front.

Fetus

The fetus is eight to ten inches long, and weighs six ounces.

Eyebrows and eyelashes form.

The fetus may suck its thumb. It kicks vigorously.

Fifth And Sixth Months

I was getting so big, I couldn't see my feet anymore.

Mother

Pregnancy is very evident — to the mother and to anyone else who sees her. She probably has gained about 15 pounds, although there is wide variation.

Her daily activities continue as usual. She goes to work or school, takes care of a house and children, or does all these things.

The uterus continues to stretch. By now the doctor can feel the top of the uterus above the level of her navel.

The mother is less tired now. Nausea doesn't bother her anymore.

Fetus

The baby can open and close its eyes.

The baby can hear and respond with sharp movement to sudden noises.

The baby sleeps and wakes. When awake, the baby kicks and twists and turns.

The baby is getting hair on its head.

By the end of this period, the baby will weigh about two pounds and be 14 or 15 inches long.

The baby is still not mature enough to survive in the outside world. If born now, his or her chances of living would be very small, but not impossible.

The Final Trimester

I don't even recognize my own body. I'm so big, I can't tie my own shoes or turn over in bed at night.

Mother

The mother is big with pregnancy now. She may feel clumsy, and it's hard for her to do many simple things, like tying her own shoes or turning over in bed. She may have some swelling in her face or hands and feet.

Sometimes the mother finds this tremendously changed body difficult to accept as her own. She may feel ugly and unlovable. She can feel better or worse about herself, depending on how the people around her react.

She gets tired now. Some jobs at work or home may be too much for her. She often needs help from the father and others to take over the heavy jobs. If she gets help, she can still work and run a household until she goes into labor.

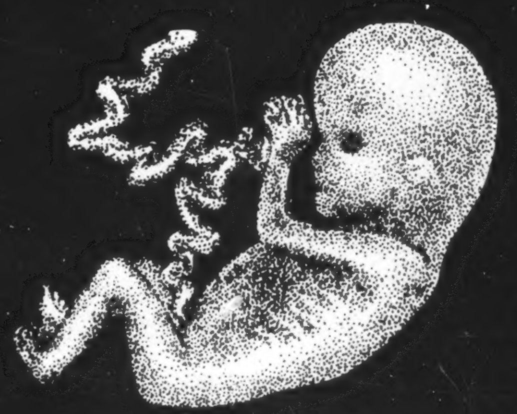
The last week or so before delivery, the mother feels more comfortable than she has during these final six weeks. Her womb has moved down a little, and there's more room for her lungs and digestive organs to work.

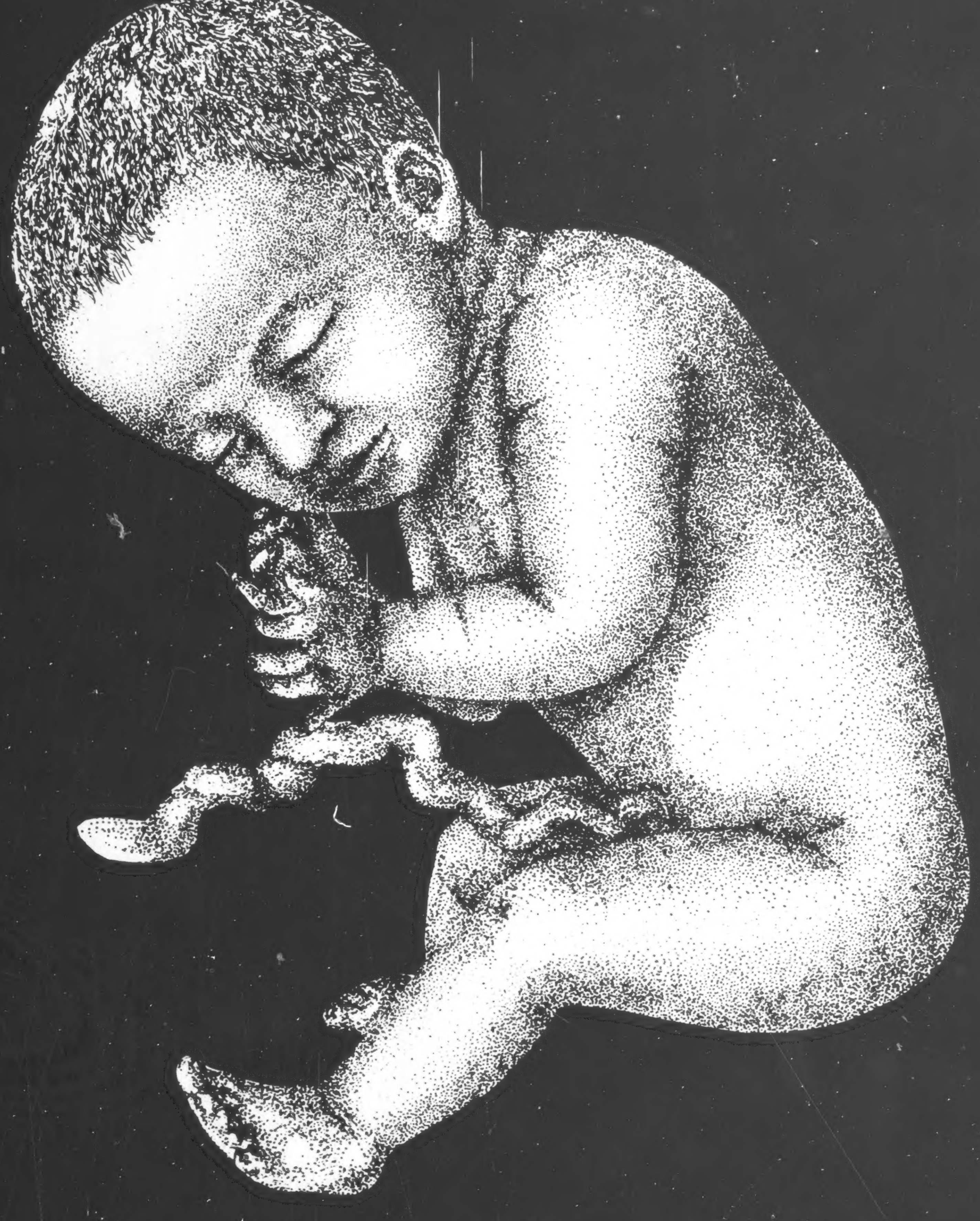
Fetus

The baby grows rapidly. At seven months the average baby weighs almost four pounds and is over 16 inches long. By the end of the ninth month, the average baby will be about 19 inches long and weigh more than seven pounds.

A baby born in this final three months has a good chance of surviving outside of the womb. The longer the pregnancy lasts and the more it weighs, the better the chances of survival. With proper care, even a 3½-pound baby has a very good chance of survival. A 5-pound baby probably will not need to be placed in an incubator.

There is less room for the baby to move around. He or she quiets down, and gets into position for being born. Usually this is with the head downward.



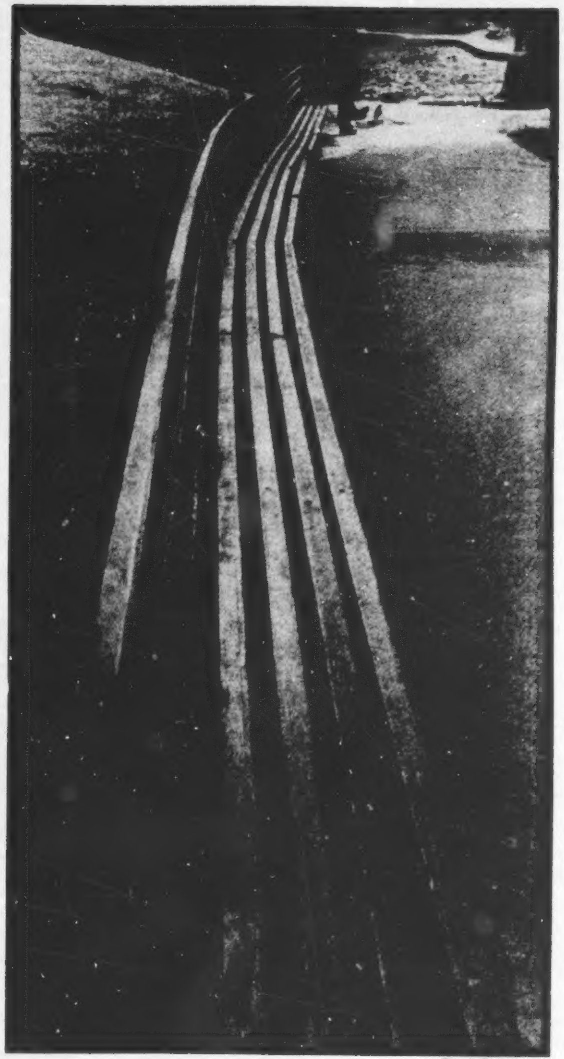


From Your Past To Your Future

There is no such thing as the perfect time for all people to have a baby. Some people can have a really great time in the middle of hardship, while others can have problems in what looks like a terrific setup. Unfortunately, many people don't choose when to have a baby, and others choose the worst possible time. Some people have babies for the wrong reasons: to *make* him or her get married; to "help" a relationship that is about to end; to replace the loss of a close friend or relative; to give in to pressure from married friends before *their* own marriage is ready for children. On the other hand, people *can* plan. They can decide the best time to have a baby. They can learn what a baby will mean in their lives and how they can handle all the responsibilities that come with a baby, *before* having the baby instead of afterward.

A wonderful quality people have is the ability to change and adapt, to discover new beginnings from old situations. People can learn from their experiences and the experiences of others. Things sometimes happen in ways people don't expect, or at unplanned times. The very fact we can't predict and chart our own futures is part of the excitement of life.

The time lines you made may be exciting to think about now, but would they still be exciting if you knew that everything on them was going to happen exactly as you hope? On the other hand, if you never planned anything in your life, the chances of getting some things you want would be less. You know you're not very likely to have money for



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that car you want, or that stereo or new outfit or big concert coming up, unless you do something about it in advance, and do something to make it happen. Thinking ahead can bring you closer to your goals, even if things don't turn out exactly the way you thought they would.

Beginnings are really the last steps people take from their own pasts, the first steps they take into their own futures. Your own beginnings are rooted in the past, and the beginnings of your possible children extend into the future. The thoughts you have now about the future reflect what you know and hope for, and who you are. They are steps toward what you might become. They are your beginnings, and possibly those of your children.

ACTIVITY

Beginning Again and Again

Glossary

Conception Occurs when one sperm of the many millions ejaculated by the male penetrates the egg of the female.

Embryo Term used in medical terminology to designate the fertilized egg through the third month of pregnancy.

Fertilization The joining of a woman's egg and a man's sperm. It is from this physical joining of the man's sperm and the woman's egg that all babies begin to develop.

Fetus Term used in medical terminology to designate the fertilized egg from the end of the third month until birth.

Hormone A chemical product of living cells that circulates in body fluids and has a specific effect on some other cells.

Implantation Occurs when a fertilized egg attaches itself to the lining of the womb, where it receives nourishment from blood cells.

Impregnation See fertilization.

Prenatal Prior to birth.